



**L'ARAGONÉS, AN ENDANGERED MINORITY LANGUAGE:
THE CASE OF AYERBE**

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**A thesis submitted to
The University of Birmingham
for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**Department of Hispanic Studies
College of Arts and Law
The University of Birmingham
April 2013**

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ABSTRACT

Aragonese is a minority endangered language used in the Alto Aragon area. Ayerbe is a town found in the Plana de Uesca in Alto Aragon, and therefore it is considered to belong to a geographical area where the use of the Aragonese language finds itself in a significant state of decline compared to the use of Castilian Spanish. This study examines the extent to which this is true. The objective was to conduct a questionnaire amongst residents in Ayerbe in order to explore their language use, their perceptions of the language, their linguistic awareness and their affinity to the concept of Aragonese identity. The results suggest that the Aragonese language in Ayerbe is more widely read and understood than was previously thought. This investigation also considers the processes of normalisation and normativisation that will be necessary for the revitalisation of the language.

Ta Ixeya, ta Amaya e ta Otto

Ta Lewis

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In a break with tradition, which always puts the family ‘last but by no means least’, I want to thank first and foremost my family. My husband Lewis has had to put up with my stress over this work and I wouldn’t have been able to do it without him. My daughters are too young to realize and have only noticed that mamá is always writing. I hope they forgive me for neglecting them. Everything in here is for them to learn to love Aragonese as much as I do.

Also thanks to my supervisor Aengus Ward for his support and to Pat Odber de Baubeta for her ideas.

Thanks are due to Francho Nagore, Oscar Latas, Fernando Romanos and everybody at the Consello d’a Fabla Aragonesa as well as those at ROLDE who offered a helping hand at the beginning.

There is also a group of people without whose help proofreading and with statistics and tables I would have never finished this thesis: Robin Milner, Eugenio Barrio, Emma Parsons, Rob Sved and Jane Garton, thank you all for being there.

Thank you to everybody in Ayerbe for all their help.

Without my parents’ and my brother’s support throughout the years I would have never even been able to start this thesis. Gracias.

Lastly, thanks to my father who has not been able to see me finish it.

CONTENTS

	Page
GENERAL INTRODUCTION	1
PART I	
INTRODUCTION	6
CHAPTER 1 ENDANGERED LANGUAGES, RIGHTS AND POLICIES	7
CHAPTER 2 ARAGONESE IN CONTEXT	63
CHAPTER 3 THE ARAGONESE LANGUAGE	88
PART II	
INTRODUCTION	115
1. METHODOLOGY	124
2. THE SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT OF THE LANGUAGE	140
3. LINGUISTIC IDENTITY IN AYERBE	161
4. LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE AND USE OF ARAGONESE	182
5. LINGUISTIC PERCEPTION	200
6. LINGUISTIC CONSUMPTION	230
7. NORMALISATION AND NORMATIVISATION OF ARAGONESE	251
8. LINGUISTIC EXPECTATIONS AND DEMANDS	280
PART III	
CONCLUSION	310

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1 Demand for autonomical expansion	141
Table 2 Aragonese identification of people from Ayerbe	143
Table 3 Aragonese identification of people from Aragon	145
Table 4 Self-identification of people from Spain	146
Table 5 Where are you in the political scale? – Ayerbe	151
Table 6 Where are you in the political scale? – Aragon	153
Table 7 Where are you in the political scale? – Spain	153
Table 8 Who did you vote for in the last General Election? –Ayerbe	155
Table 9 Who did you vote for in the last general election? – Aragon	157
Table 10 Who did you vote for in the last general election? – Spain	158
Table 11 Are there one or several Aragonese languages?	178
Table 12 Is there another linguistic variety in Ayerbe?	186
Table 13 Perception of language used in Ayerbe	215
Table 14 How do you consider the local variety?	226
Table 15 Readers of newspapers and magazines	237
Table 16 Institutions identified as promoting the Aragonese language	273
Table 17 The future of the Aragonese language by age group	289

LIST OF GRAPHS

	Page
Graph 1 Male and female participants	137
Graph 2 Participants divided by age	138
Graph 3 Demand for autonomical expansion based on political party voted	142
Graph 4 Aragonese identification	143
Graph 5 Aragonese identification and political party voted	148
Graph 6 Political scale and vote	156
Graph 7 Is the language spoken in Ayerbe similar to the language in Alto Aragon?	162
Graph 8 Alto Aragon own language	169
Graph 9 Are Aragonese and <i>Fabla</i> the same?	172
Graph 10 Is there another linguistic variety in Ayerbe?	185
Graph 11 Do you understand it?	190
Graph 12 Do you know how to speak it?	192
Graph 13 Do you know how to read it?	194
Graph 14 Do you know how to write it?	196
Graph 15 Association of the linguistic variety used in Ayerbe	202
Graph 16 How many people speak the local variety?	205
Graph 17 How many people know the local variety?	207
Graph 18 Reasons for absence of intergenerational transmission	212
Graph 19 Vernacular language use in cultural tradition	220
Graph 20 Would you like to conserve the local traditions in the vernacular language?	223
Graph 21 Book ownership	231

Graph 22 Books in Aragonese	234
Graph 23 Aragonese newspaper and magazine readership	240
Graph 24 Audio consumption	245
Graph 25 Audio consumption in Aragonese	246
Graph 26 Have you heard of “aragonés común”?	258
Graph 27 Opinion on a common written Aragonese language	260
Graph 28 What do you think of “aragonés común”?	262
Graph 29 Have you read texts in “aragonés común”?	263
Graph 30 Have you written texts in “Aragonés común”?	264
Graph 31 Do you speak “aragonés común”?	265
Graph 32 Identification of standard Aragonese with local variety	267
Graph 33 Need for a standard Aragonese	269
Graph 34 Knowledge of institutions that promote Aragonese	272
Graph 35 Use of Aragonese in signs	277
Graph 36 Official protection of standard Aragonese	283
Graph 37 The future of the Aragonese language	287
Graph 38 Should there be papers or magazines written in Aragonese?	293
Graph 39 Presence of Aragonese in radio and television	299
Graph 40 How should the teaching of Aragonese be in Alto Aragon?	306

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1 Dialects of Aragonese	89
Figure 2 Map of Ayerbe and surrounding area.....	164
Figure 3 Xigantes poem.....	221
Figure 4 Incorrect Aragonese spelling in signage	276

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Aragon is a region found in the north east of Spain, it has borders with Catalonia to the east, Navarra and the Basque country to the west, Valencia and Guadalajara to the south and the Pyrenees and France to the north. In Aragon, two vernacular languages coexist with Spanish, which is the national language used by the majority of the population. Catalan is spoken along the longitudinal east section that borders with Catalonia and Aragonese is spoken mostly in the northern Pyrenean valleys. The geographical context of the Aragonese language is defined by the relative isolation of these Pyrenean valleys and their traditional separation from the urban environments.

Aragon has not always been identified as a linguistic minority community. There are some languages in the Spanish peninsula like Catalan that have been described as a minority (and minorised), regional and national language. Aragonese on the other hand, although it is the language spoken in one of the regions in Spain, struggles first of all to be recognised as a language, cannot be fully identified as a regional language since it is mostly known and used in Alto Aragon and thus most people in Aragon would not identify Aragonese as their regional language, (in fact there would be many people in Teruel, the southern most province in the region, who would struggle to identify it among other languages) and only a few would consider it as a national language. However, it is a minority language according to the classification provided by Daoust:

‘A sophisticated concept of linguistic minority takes into account not only geographic distribution, but also ethnic, sociocultural, and political factors, as well as the resulting sociolinguistic status’¹

¹Denise Daoust, ‘Language Planning and Language Reform’ in *The Handbook of Sociolinguistics*, ed. by Florian Coulmas (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), p. 443.

For that reason, if all those factors are taken into account, as we will see in Part I of this study, then Aragonese can be considered a minority language.

Aragonese is an endangered language. The last linguistic census in Aragon was completed in 1981 so the data is now quite old and it is difficult to know the exact number of current speakers of Aragonese. However, it is clear that many of those speakers who took part in the census would have died by now and, as we will see later in the analysis of the questionnaire, the number of young people who learn the language is very small. Besides, many of the villages in Alto Aragon, normally the centres of the Aragonese language, have decreased in size in the last few decades due to migration of their inhabitants to the cities. This in turn has contributed to hindering intergenerational transmission. In addition, as will be explored in Chapter 3 and later through some questions regarding education in the questionnaire, there is no compulsory education in the language nor willingness to learn it. This leads to the projection that there will be fewer than those 10,000 speakers of Aragonese from 1981. Therefore it is clear that Aragonese is an endangered language, as Krauss proposes a number of 100,000 speakers needed for a language to be safe with political and social support,² and the number of Aragonese speakers clearly does not reach that threshold.

This study considers the case of Aragon's linguistic, cultural and politic situation in a way that highlights the wider implications for the task of revitalising, and maintaining endangered minority languages in general, although there will be more similarities to this case in the context of Europe.

² Cited in Emily McEwan-Fujita, "Gaelic Doomed as Speakers Die Out"? The public discourse of Gaelic language death in Scotland' in *Investigating Obsolescence: Studies in Language Contraction and Death*, ed. By Wilson McLeod (Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press, 2006) p. 284.

I look at attitudes to the Aragonese language and their relation to the expression of an Aragonese ethnic identity. In doing so, my intention is to present an examination of the issues surrounding Aragonese language use, thereby providing a basis for further study of the language.

There are two principal hypotheses. First that the Aragonese language may be an intrinsic characteristic of Aragonese ethnic identity (even if it is not used). Secondly that lack of firm linguistic policies and planning impact on the behavioural practices of language users, and these practices in turn, may be reflected in their attitudes towards the language. This second hypothesis has a subsection, that it is this attitude towards the language and the lack of linguistic awareness that may be to blame for the death of the Aragonese language.

The title of the thesis places the Aragonese language in the context of being an endangered and a minority language and the hypothesis frames the situation of the language by exploring how its identity impinges on the characteristics associated with Aragonese as a minority language on the one hand, and how the language policy and language planning affect its endangered status.

I explored these issues in a questionnaire I conducted in Ayerbe and the results can be extrapolated to the general situation in the Alto Aragon area and therefore to the Aragonese language.

In conducting this questionnaire and in general throughout the whole thesis I had to distance myself in order to remain as objective as possible. Although I am not a speaker of Aragonese, as a native and a researcher from the area, I had to take responsibility for

constructing an interpretation of the situation of Aragonese which was necessarily going to be rooted in my socially and historically positioned subjectivity³.

I found this challenging, as personally I do not want Aragonese to be added to the list of dead languages. However, although I have a personal engagement I have attempted to write in an objective and analytical manner. I cannot be considered a true insider as I have not lived in the area for almost twenty years and other than through research, I am not currently involved in the encompassing sociolinguistic situation of Aragonese. From the perspective of a non Aragonese speaker I have tried to present an evaluation of the different issues from an academic outlook incorporating my ‘insider’ information and experience, but at the same time recognising the advantages and shortcomings.

This thesis is divided into three parts. Part I comprises three chapters. The first chapter discusses endangered languages, rights and policies and examines the literature on all the topics that are relevant to the background information needed for this sociolinguistic study. For this purpose, key terms such as nationality, identity, minority languages as well as language policy and language planning are defined. The second chapter places the Aragonese language in context and, as well as a historic perspective, there is an overview of political Aragonism in the XXth century together with the contemporary political identity in Aragon and a review of the linguistic evolution compared to the situation with other languages in the Spanish context. Chapter 3 describes the Aragonese language and its current situation in terms of both a linguistic and a sociolinguistic perspective. Part II is a case study of the sociolinguistic situation of the Aragonese language in Ayerbe which is

³ Monica Heller, ‘Doing Ethnography’ in *The Blackwell Guide to Research Methods in Bilingualism and Multilingualism*, ed. by Li Wei and Melissa G. Moyer (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008) p. 251.

based on the issues earlier discussed in Chapter 1. The results of a questionnaire conducted in Ayerbe are analysed there. Part III is the final conclusion.

PART I

Introduction

The main aim of this part is to offer the background information and definitions of some of the areas within the sociolinguistic field that are relevant to the study of bilingual or multilingual communities in general and within the historical and contemporary context of Aragon and Aragonese in particular. This is followed by a placing of the Aragonese language in the context of its history and its linguistic circumstances. The theory and the background information about Aragon and Aragonese will become relevant in the second part in order to understand the context of some of the questions in the questionnaire.

In order to consider the background to the current situation of Aragonese, Part 1 of this Thesis is concerned with the sociolinguistic context of Aragon and the Aragonese language within the framework of sociolinguistic theory.

Chapter 1 is a study of the theoretical information which brings together current theories regarding socio-political factors pertaining to language, policies, rights and identity. Chapter 2 looks at the evolution of the language in the context of Aragon and other languages in Spain from a historical and contemporary perspective and Chapter 3 reviews the current use and status of the Aragonese language in connection with the theoretical framework.

CHAPTER 1 Endangered languages, rights and policies

1.1 Endangered languages

An endangered language is a language that may disappear before long, and whose use as a vehicle of communication will discontinue.⁴ According to the Foundation for Endangered Languages, and reiterated by other organisations like Ethnologue and linguists who have considered the world's linguistic situation, half of the languages on earth are moribund and are not being passed on to the next generation;⁵ this is threatening their imminent demise, and it can be argued that we are living at a time when, in as little as two generations, most languages in the world may die out.⁶

Many linguists have endeavoured to define when a language can be classified as endangered, among them Fishman who designed a graded scale of threatened status with eight stages of intergenerational disruption, based on the failure to secure intergenerational mother tongue transmission.⁷ The most threatened languages were those on stage eight where the languages are only used by socially isolated elderly people and where the adults who could potentially learn them are demographically dispersed, followed by those on stage seven where the language is used by a socially integrated and ethnolinguistically active population who are beyond child bearing age. Stage six reflects a lower stage of endangerment since the language is at least used orally although it lacks demographic concentration of its speakers and institutional reinforcement.

⁴ Eda Derhemi, 'Thematic Introduction: Protecting Endangered Minority Languages: Sociolinguistic Perspectives', *International Journal on Multicultural Societies*, 4 (2002), 150-161.

⁵ David Crystal, 'Creating a world of languages' (2004) Paper presented at the Linguapax Congress <<http://www.linguapax.org/congres04/pdf/crystal.pdf>> [accessed 20 May 2012].

⁶ Nicholas D. M. Ostler (ed.), *Iatiku. Newsletter on the Foundation for Endangered Languages*. Number 2. 9 April 1996. p. 6.

⁷ Joshua A. Fishman, *Reversing Language Shift: Theoretical and Empirical Foundations of Assistance to Threatened Languages* (Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters, 1991), pp 87-119.

Later Krauss compared languages to endangered biological species and identified languages as endangered when the language will cease to be learned by children in the not too distant future and moribund when the languages are not being learned by children as their mother tongue should the existing conditions continue.⁸ This I believe is the main issue when discussing the problems faced by endangered languages.

There are several crucial economic, cultural and political reasons, like globalisation and the extent of use of the English language, which make it surprising that so many declining languages manage to survive at all,

“The current situation is without precedent: the world has never had so many people in it, globalisation processes have never been so marked; communication and transport technologies have never been so omnipresent; there has never been so much language contact; and no language has ever exercised so much international influence as English.”⁹

The question is, why are many of these languages ceasing to exist? There is not a particular explanation as to why this happens, however as will be seen, there are several factors involved. In many cases, scores of these languages are in a critical survival situation and when the stage is reached that their last speaker perishes and those languages are no longer spoken; this leads to language death. The different causes leading to this scenario could be brought together by issues like emigration of the speakers to better their economic situation, areas becoming impoverished through drought, desertification or other natural disasters in turn leading to force migration, displacement or dispersion of speakers to other areas as well as relocation from rural areas to the cities and political reasons

⁸ Michael Krauss, 'The world's languages in crisis', *Language*, 68 (1992), 4-10.

⁹ David Crystal, *Language Death* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.70.

among others. All these motives would break or impair the community where the language would have been transmitted and spoken, and since a language is not an independent entity and would need more than one individual for it to exist and thrive, the limitation of that individual to communicate in the language would spell its death.

In numerous other cases the people may live but the language may still die, as a result of issues like political and economic factors or the effect of development and expansion of communication infrastructure; at times it is linked to the influence that lack of standardisation or a deficient institutional support may have on the survival of the language itself; many people have also been forced to stop speaking their languages out of self-defence or as a survival strategy akin to what happened to many speakers of minority languages in Spain during the post civil war era.¹⁰

Therefore, a decrease in the number of speakers together with fewer domains of use of the language would be the main symptoms of language death.¹¹ These two warning signs often take place concurrently with a structural simplification of the language, unequivocally ascertained by Maiden in his article on the dying years of Dalmatian.¹² In this article he identifies morphological change as one of the processes at work in language death which is one of the many aspects of structural simplification experienced by some dying languages.

1.1.1 Intergenerational transmission

As McEwan-Fujita mentions when discussing the problems of revitalising Gaelic in Scotland, the key point of language death often dramatically interpreted as a focus on

¹⁰ Daniel Nettle and Suzanne Romaine, *Vanishing Voices: The Extinction of the world's languages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 6.

¹¹ Nancy C. Dorian, 'Language shift in community and individual: The phenomenon of the laggard semi-speaker', *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 25 (1980), 85-94.

¹² Martin Maiden, 'Morphological change in the dying years of Dalmatian', *Diachronica*, 21 (2004), 85-111.

speaker death serves to draw attention away from the core problem in language shift, that is, the cessation of language transmission from one generation to the next.¹³

It is indisputable that the critical issue for a language to survive is that it needs to be transmitted from parents to children and clearly one of the main concerns about endangered languages is when they are not passed on to the next generation.¹⁴ This leads to the shrinkage of speech communities of these languages which will ultimately vanish even if they are not necessarily languages with few speakers, as at times; children may no longer acquire languages through child rearing or formal education even when many thousands of elderly speakers still use them.¹⁵ Thus intergenerational mother tongue transmission is often placed at the very centre of reversing language shift efforts before setting out to conquer other societal processes that are more remote or uncertain. For that reason fluent older adults and elders are often encouraged to provide pre-school childcare where children are immersed in the language as well as more young parents are animated to speak the language at home with their young children to avoid becoming individuals with only a passive knowledge of the endangered language.

This intergenerational transmission experience is more likely to be provided by the binding experience made available by the affective intimacy of the family, the neighbourhood, the community and society rather than the school.¹⁶ However, these mother tongue transmission efforts are becoming more and more complex as the urban

¹³ McEwan-Fujita, p. 281.

¹⁴ Gloria Kindell, *Endangered Language Groups*, SIL International
<<http://www.sil.org/sociolx/ndg-lg-grps.html>> [accessed 26 May 2012].

¹⁵ Matthias Brezinger and Tjeerd de Graaf, 'Documenting Endangered Languages and Maintaining Language Diversity', *Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems (EOLSS)*, 6.20B.10.3 (UNESCO, 2005), p. 3.

¹⁶ Fishman, *Reversing Language Shift*, p. 6.

family setting changes either by both parents working full time or a decrease in children being raised in a two parent family, thus meaning that parents and children spend relatively few hours together per week. Although school may play a significant role in supplementing the intergenerational disruption, by the time children reach school age, it is too late for schools to influence mother tongue transmission.¹⁷ Besides, there are several teaching models of bilingual or multilingual education, namely what Skutnabb-Kangas¹⁸ calls Nonmodels and Weak Models of teaching the mother tongue, which involve mostly mainstream monolingual programs in the majority language and several ways of instruction entailing a limited exposure to their mother tongue respectively. These models are clear examples of hinder rather than benefit the Indigenous, Tribal or Minority language children's education and they promote language shift. In general, linguistic minority children with a low status mother tongue tend to be forced to accept instruction through the medium of a majority language with high status in submersion programs, this system leads to parents feeling that they are losing their children, who may feel ashamed of their language, their own parents and their culture because they no longer know the mother tongue and, although they may be assimilating quickly, they are not achieving the benefits that were promised with assimilation. Critically, all these various teaching prototypes or models for minority children match, in failing to transmit the mother tongue, the United Nations' definition of linguistic genocide.¹⁹ This destruction of languages and cultures through education has been identified with cultural genocide, which in turn, when referring to the irreparable death of any of the more than five thousand languages that

¹⁷ Fishman, *Reversing Language Shift*, pp. 373-378.

¹⁸ Tove Skutnabb-Kangas and Robert Dunbar, 'Indigenous Children's Education as Linguistic Genocide and a Crime Against Humanity? A Global View', *Gáldu Čála, Journal of Indigenous Peoples' Rights*, 1 (2010), pp. 47 & 89.

¹⁹ Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, 'Education of minorities' in *Handbook of Language and Ethnic Identity*, ed. by Joshua A. Fishman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 45- 47.

constitute humanity's most valuable assets, could be described as humanity's self-destruction. In fact, it is worth noting that linguistic and cultural genocide have been examined alongside physical genocide by the United Nations. Cultural genocide would mean threatening or destroying the culture of a group which may involve threats or destruction of their language.²⁰

1.1.2 Language loss, culture loss

It is undeniable that as Brezinger and de Graaf state,²¹ the protection of cultural heritage, of which a language may be considered the most important component, may determine the viability of that language if it is positively favoured by its speakers. Many more linguists, like Nettle and Romaine²² comment on linguistic diversity as a benchmark of cultural diversity and language death being symptomatic of cultural death, as well as Skutnabb-Kangas²³ who asserts that when languages disappear, the historical knowledge that is encoded in them is also made to be invisible. However, this issue is particularly controversial from an emotional as well as a political point of view, Fishman, who states that "most of the culture is in the language and is expressed in the language"²⁴ and that "no language but the one that has been most historically and intimately associated with a given culture is as well able to express the artefacts and the concerns of that culture"²⁵, also seems to share the view that it is possible to be Xmen without Xish.²⁶ Nevertheless, before reaching conclusions, the association of language and culture needs to be examined

²⁰ Skutnabb-Kangas and Dunbar, pp. 90-91.

²¹ Brezinger and de Graaf, p. 3.

²² Nettle and Romaine, p.7.

²³ Skutnabb-Kangas and Dunbar, p. 44.

²⁴ Joshua Fishman, 'What do you lose when you lose your language?' in *Stabilizing indigenous languages*, ed. by Gina Cantoni (Northern Arizona University: Flagstaff, AZ: Center for Excellence in Education, 1996), pp. 80-91 (p. 81).

²⁵ Fishman, *Reversing Language Shift*, p. 21.

²⁶ Fishman in Tasaku Tsunoda, *Language Endangerment and Language Revitalization* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2004), p. 165.

more closely. Tasaku Tsunoda²⁷ tries to shed light on the following questions, “is it possible to retain a culture after the traditional language associated with it is lost?” and “what is lost when a language is lost?”, or in other words; does language loss imply culture loss?

Although the answers may vary depending on the language group, it is clear that linguists’ opinions are divided and while it cannot be denied that the loss of a language will unavoidably entail the loss of some aspects of the culture transmitted by the language, it could be deemed unjustifiable to maintain that when a language is lost, the culture is also completely lost.

While many linguists have tried to consider these questions, one of the most eloquent answers is given by Nancy Dorian in her work in Western Scotland:²⁸

“I found that when I asked speakers of Scottish Gaelic whether a knowledge of Gaelic was necessary to being a ‘true Highlander’, they said it was; when I asked people of Highland birth and ancestry who did not speak Gaelic the same question, they said it wasn’t.”

It is apparent in these answers that Highlanders do not always believe that the Gaelic language is a conveyor of culture and constitutes irreplaceable cultural knowledge. Along these lines Crystal states that not all cultures seem to have the same regard for language as a solid symbol of ethnic identity.²⁹ Based on the previous premises and while I acknowledge that language has the greatest potential to act as an identity emblem and represent a feature of ethnicity, I believe that there is only a partial identity between

²⁷ Tsunoda, pp. 161-165.

²⁸ Nancy Dorian, ‘Western language ideologies and small-language prospects’, in *Endangered Languages: Language Loss and Community Response*, ed. by Lenore Grenoble and Lindsay Whaley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 20.

²⁹ Crystal, *Language Death*, p. 121.

language and culture that is often greater the less endangered a language is, and although there may be some aspects of the culture that would not be able to be conveyed in exactly the same way and may disappear to a large extent and language may well not be the only way to transmit culture, those who do not speak the ethnic language may still be considered members of the ethnic group but less so than their fluent grandmothers and grandfathers.

1.1.3 Endangered minority languages

When discussing endangered minority languages, it is worth considering whether attaching the minority label to a particular language automatically entails that the language in question is endangered. Derhemi states that an endangered language is not always a minority language and minority languages are not always endangered, although significantly, a minority language would have a high probability of becoming endangered if it was to find itself in a situation of neglect.³⁰

If endangered minority languages are to be accounted for, I believe there is a need for them to be identified, yet that identification is a difficult and on the whole arbitrary task which depends on social factors as well as linguistic ones. Those languages that are less necessary from a functional point of view have a tendency to hold a lower position in the power hierarchy. These tend to be identified as minority languages and in turn, it is this lack of being functionally needed that could make a language start on the process of endangerment if they begin by no longer being needed on the political, social or economic domains. Pandharipande groups languages into four categories depending on their power together with the quantity of their speakers: a language can be powerful as well as majority like many national languages in Europe and dominant languages in Africa; a

³⁰ Derhemi, 'Thematic Introduction', pp. 150-161.

majority language but powerless like many languages spoken by millions in India that are powerless against the languages dominant in the different domains; a minority but powerful like English in many of the colonial countries and as an example of the situation encountered by many tribal languages; minority and powerless. It is in this last grouping that the majority of endangered minority languages find themselves.³¹

However, the numerical criterion can be inaccurate as languages at risk are not necessarily languages with few speakers, even though small communities are more vulnerable to external threats. It cannot always be concluded that all small languages are in peril and equally that all large languages are safe. An obvious case is Icelandic, which only has 100,000 speakers but it is not in danger of extinction,³² as opposed to those languages mentioned by Pandharipande in India like Kashmiri which counts with well over four million speakers, but whose functional measure is relatively low.

Majority and dominant languages by and large have a conspicuous public role, represent an attraction and are usually prestigious,³³ whereas for endangered minority languages their social status and prestige, which are in all probability the power behind the process of attrition and maintenance, depend on a complex array of economic and cultural factors which are in turn related to the linguistic attitudes of the community members.³⁴ For all endangered minority languages the concerns are the same: how great is the language vitality and what is the prognosis for the continued use of the language. There are a number of typical social characteristics that affect their prospects: the restriction of the minority language to a limited set of domains, the unevenness between younger and older

³¹ Rajeshwari Pandharipande, 'Minority Matters: Issues in Minority Languages in India', *International Journal on Multicultural Societies*, 4 (2002), 213-234.

³² Nettle and Romaine, p. 9.

³³ Herman Batibo, *Language Decline and Death in Africa: Causes, Consequences and Challenges* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2005), pp. 24-25.

³⁴ Derhemi, 'Thematic Introduction', p. 151.

speakers' choice of language where the younger speakers tend to use the majority language more often, the association of the dominant or majority language with socio-economic advancement and the decreasing loyalty towards the minority language.³⁵

As a consequence, these languages remain endangered, and as Fishman asserts, it is not because they are not being taught at school or due to lack of official status, which some of them have gained; it is an effect of the lack of the previously pointed out intergenerational transmission within the family and informal life support on a daily basis.³⁶ The preceding argument, together with the fact that these endangered languages are recurrently surrounded by unsympathetic insiders who often have already started to devise a new identity that may be based on their more rewarding connection with the majority language and which often offers a distinct market value, leads to an uncertain measure of linguistic security which is detrimental for the maintenance of these languages.³⁷

1.1.4 Reversing Language Shift

The crucial question regarding endangered languages is: what can be done to reverse a language shift which has skipped one or more than one generation and is advancing towards a point of irretrievability?

There is a division amongst sociolinguists on whether to endorse institutional protection and intervention or simply be passive witnesses of the dying languages. Many agree that it is desirable to maintain the linguistic and cultural diversity associated with revitalisation but are sceptical about its success, as language revitalisation is an expensive and complex task and will only be successful if the communities themselves have the desire and

³⁵ Ruth King, 'On the social meaning of linguistic variability in language death situations: Variation in Newfoundland French' in *Investigating obsolescence: Studies in language contraction and death*, ed. by Nancy Dorian (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 140.

³⁶ Cited in Suzanne Romaine, 'The Impact of Language Policy on Endangered Languages', *International Journal on Multicultural Societies*, 4 (2002), 194-212.

³⁷ Fishman, *Reversing Language Shift*, p. 83.

motivation. Otherwise, any institutionally imposed programme will eventually be ineffective.³⁸

The spectrum of revitalisation attempts, according to John Edwards, is noticeably extensive, although the revival efforts are often seen to be belated, frequently when the groups of important native speakers have dwindled beyond remedy.³⁹ Therefore, the process of revitalisation needs to be started as soon as it is desirable and feasible. However, according to Skutnabb-Kangas there are some politicians and also many researchers who have seen this 'promotion of the linguistic and cultural heritage of humankind' as a nostalgic dream and argue that in terms of cost and efficiency it is not viable to keep linguistic diversity going.⁴⁰ She, however, refutes arguments regarding the cost efficiency of communications and multilingualism and concludes that killing linguistic diversity equates to the killing of biodiversity and could be classified as dangerous reductionism.

Along the same lines, Fishman, although agreeing on the complexity and difficulties of linguistic salvation being decidedly uncompromising,⁴¹ argues that it is crucial to focus on efforts to reverse the shift of a language, particularly on those efforts that can be engaged in by communities locally and by their constituent families through their own dedication and resources.⁴²

³⁸ Derhemi, 'Thematic Introduction', p. 159.

³⁹ John Edwards, 'Language Revitalization and its Discontents: An essay and review of Saving languages: An introduction to language revitalization', *Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics (CJAL)/Revue canadienne de linguistique appliquée (RCLA)* 2010
<<http://ojs.vre.upei.ca/index.php/cjal/article/view/260/312>> [accessed 6 March 2011], pp. 112-113.

⁴⁰ Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, *Linguistic genocide in education or worldwide diversity and human rights* (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2000), pp. 249-270.

⁴¹ Joshua Fishman, *Can threatened Languages be Saved? Reversing Language Shift, Revisited; A 21st Century Perspective* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2001).

⁴² Fishman, *Reversing Language Shift*, p. 4.

Although the speakers of endangered languages are clearly the ones who make the ultimate decision to uphold or to abandon a language and therefore will be the actual individuals involved in executing the measures needed for revitalisation and language maintenance, linguists as well as other scholars can help communities in their endeavours. In such a way, it would be linguists together with community members who would undertake the responsibility for documenting those languages so that the legacy can be passed on to future generations.⁴³ David Crystal for instance has created a list of measures to be used as strategy in order to make an impact on public consciousness and aid revitalisation, suggesting making the media, the schools and homes aware of the concerns.⁴⁴

Many more linguists, like de Graaf, also clearly support pursuing the efforts involved in sustaining an endangered language, proposing key issues to succeed with the revitalisation processes, these being: the need for education in the language, supporting and developing language policy and planning and improving living conditions and respect for the human rights of speaker communities, and above all, mainly highlighting together with the process of revitalisation itself, the need to document, maintain, protect and standardise the languages.⁴⁵

In terms of documentation, one of the main pieces of advice in order to support the stable use of non-dominant languages is the urgency of documenting threatened languages. This could be achieved by first evaluating the amount, quality and type of materials available for the community and the linguist who would then design research projects together with

⁴³ Brezinger and de Graaf, p. 2.

⁴⁴ Crystal, 'Creating a World of Languages'.

⁴⁵ Tjeerd de Graaf, 'Language Vitality and Endangerment', document submitted to the *International Expert Meeting on UNESCO Programme Safeguarding of Endangered Languages*, (2003), 5-6.

members of the language community. The situation tends to be more problematic, when the nature of documentation, including written texts and annotated audiovisual recordings is fragmentary, inadequate and more so when the languages are undocumented.⁴⁶

When a language has been recognised as endangered, a decision needs to be taken as to whether or not it will be attempted to maintain it. Language maintenance is not always endorsed, like when speakers and linguist may be discouraged to maintain it due to the socioeconomic factors that led to the language becoming endangered initially. However, language maintenance is frequently promoted with reference to human rights and cultural diversity.⁴⁷ There are two main ways of achieving maintenance of endangered languages; a process that originates from the top, like legislation, or inversely, through movements like ethnic pride that work their way up, although it is ultimately up to the endangered language community to choose whether maintenance is to be undertaken. If that is the case, half of the mechanisms of intervention that can be attempted to procure maintenance of the language relate to its status and represent socioeconomic advantages bestowed on members of the community who speak that language. As Minett and Wang concluded after having created a model for language competition, instigating an increase in the status of a language could facilitate its maintenance.⁴⁸

Within the endangered language community, it is the family domain that is of crucial importance for the maintenance of that language, since this is where multilingualism frequently takes place and may even persist there after monolingualism has succeeded in

⁴⁶ de Graaf, pp.15-16.

⁴⁷ Konstanze Glaser, 'Reimagining the Gaelic community: ethnicity, hybridity, politics and communication' in *Revitalising Gaelic in Scotland; policy, planning and public discourse*, ed. by Wilson McLeod (Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press, 2006), p. 170.

⁴⁸ James Minett and William Wang, 'Modelling endangered languages: The effects of bilingualism and social structure', *Lingua*, 118 (2008) 19-45 (pp. 20-28).

other domains.⁴⁹ However, as Woolard argues when referring to Catalan as one of the most successful cases of language maintenance in Europe, there is also a pivotal figure that determines which language is used in a conversation: the proficient interlocutor, be it in the family domain or not.⁵⁰

As far as the protection and preservation of an endangered language is concerned, the emphasis is given to the speech communities, and their efforts to preserve their languages are considered an active factor in the existence as well as the implementation of language policies.⁵¹ However, for high-level planning to be feasible, there cannot be a considerable degree of disruption in the use of the language. The remains of a language that has already reached a level of extensive disintegration would first of all need to be pieced together.⁵² In order to assist in doing that or to avoid any further deterioration in the case of some languages, many linguists maintain the importance of writing and codifying a language and endorse following a process of standardisation.

However, standardising an endangered language has its detractors as well as its supporters. Gal agrees with the premise that regarding linguistic form, standardisation causes contradiction and that it implies that sometimes it is necessary to kill the language in order to be able to save it.⁵³ On a similar note, some native speakers of Breton discourage standardisation of Breton in their belief that their language is only capable of

⁴⁹ Martina Müller, 'Language use, language attitudes and Gaelic writing ability among secondary pupils in the Isle of Skye' in *Revitalising Gaelic in Scotland: policy, planning and public discourse*, ed. by Wilson McLeod (Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press, 2006), p. 122.

⁵⁰ Kathryn Woolard, 'Language convergence and language death as social processes' in *Revitalising Gaelic in Scotland: policy, planning and public discourse*, ed. by Wilson McLeod (Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press, 2006), pp. 357- 360.

⁵¹ Derhemi, 'Thematic Introduction', p. 151.

⁵² Nettle and Romaine, p. 178.

⁵³ Susan Gal, 'Migration, minorities and multilingualism: language ideologies in Europe' in *Language ideologies, policies and practices; language and the future of Europe*, ed. by Clare Mar-Molinero and Patrick Stevenson (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 21.

being used for limited intra-group communication and to transmit local oral traditions.⁵⁴ On the other hand, linguists like Jaine Beswick claim that standardisation is “one of the most important elements of corpus planning relevant to the notion of identity”,⁵⁵ alongside Wardaugh who maintains that the process of standardisation unifies groups and individuals within a larger community as well as being employed as a symbol of identity and to provide prestige to its speakers.⁵⁶ Also, for Arbresh speakers in Sicily studied by Derhemi,⁵⁷ the most important factors preventing the process of linguistic disintegration of the language are using the written form and linguistic codification in schools, since as in their case if linguistic loyalty is reasonably high, there is more guarantee of success in terms of the wider use of the language aided by linguistic policies.⁵⁸ Based on these advantages awarded by standardisation, I believe in establishing a normative form for a language and in the teaching of the written codified form of it in order to avoid structural deterioration and what could eventually become the death of the language.

This analysis of endangered languages and the ways to avoid their demise are the pivotal point of this thesis, which is a sociolinguistic study specifically looking at the possibilities of endangered and minority languages.

⁵⁴ Lois Kuter, ‘Breton vs. French: Language and the opposition of political, economic, social and cultural values’ in *Investigating obsolescence: Studies in language contraction and death*, ed. by Nancy Dorian (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 83.

⁵⁵ Jaine Beswick, *Regional Nationalism in Spain: Language Use and Ethnic Identity in Galicia* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2007), p. 76.

⁵⁶ Ronald Wardaugh, *An introduction to sociolinguistics*, 5th edn (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), pp. 34-35.

⁵⁷ Derhemi, ‘Thematic Introduction’, pp. 158.

⁵⁸ Eda Derhemi, ‘The Endangered Arbresh Language and the Importance of Standardised Writing for its survival: The Case of Piana degli Albanesi, Sicily’, *International Journal on Multicultural Societies*, 4.2 (2002), 248-269 (p. 249)

1.2 Minority languages

When reflecting on what could be classified as a minority language, first there is a need to define the concept of minority. There is nothing automatic about this concept, since this notion is socially constructed and tends to involve a political process. Most of the academic and political debate about this issue links it to concepts like ethnicity or culture.⁵⁹ Once the definition needs to extend to linguistic minorities however, experts in language policy have often applied Francesco Capotorti's definition of 'minority' developed for the United Nations:

“A group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a State, in a non-dominant position, whose members – being nationals of the State – possess ethnic, religious, or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language.”⁶⁰

However, from a sociolinguistic point of view, in addition to the group being inferior demographically, Batibo adds political and socio-economic inferiority, as these groups tend to typify a weak, low status position and enjoy limited use of their language in public events in relation to other languages in the region or nation.⁶¹ In fact, the expression 'minority language' has come into being because some of the literature tends to avoid the word 'minority', giving preference to the term 'regional' used in the political debate in order to reflect a non-essentialist geographical association. Also, in the context of the institutions of the European Union 'lesser used languages' has been coined in order to

⁵⁹ François Grin, *Language Policy Evaluation and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p.19.

⁶⁰ Cited in Grin, p. 20.

⁶¹ Batibo, p. 51.

avoid the term ‘minority’, since some member states do not acknowledge minorities among their citizens as well as the term ‘regional’ which does not allow for non-regional languages.⁶²

As well as encouraging movements towards forms of political autonomy and self-government which have benefited minorities and their languages all over the world, there have also been some key initiatives in the European Union like the MERCATOR network for information on minority languages, The European Bureau of Lesser Used Languages, and the European Charter on Regional or Minority Languages.⁶³

Although Tabouret-Keller associates the concept of a regional language to supposedly strong cultural attributes as well as a reasonably large territory, and conversely a minority language with having a small territory, whose prospects for survival are uncertain and its potential for development limited;⁶⁴ in the Charter, clearly better suited to the European context and citing numerical and territorial aspects, the terminology used is ‘regional or minority languages’ and according to the definition used in Article 1, it means languages that are:

“Traditionally used within a given territory of a State by nationals of that State who form a group numerically smaller than the rest of the State’s population” and that are “different from the official language(s) of that State”⁶⁵

This definition would have taken into account the fact that in Europe what is considered a regional language can at times also be a minority language, as is the case of Galician. However, this classification could possibly overlap with the notion of a national language

⁶² Grin, p. 20.

⁶³ Nettle and Romaine, p. 201.

⁶⁴ Andrée Tabouret-Keller, ‘Western Europe’, in *Handbook of Language and Ethnic Identity*, ed. by Joshua Fishman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 337.

⁶⁵ Grin, p. 20.

in some cases, since a regional language in a neighbouring state could be the national language of another state, as happens with Alsatian or Corsican.⁶⁶ Besides, since there is no reference to the languages spoken by established immigrants in Europe, there could be some confusion between the notion of linguistic minorities and ethnic minorities. The ethnic notion has often been marginalised and treated as a residual category and by association the use of minority languages has been considered in the past as ‘ethnic’, implying an expression of a desire to remain non-normative or nonconformist, failing to be associated with a different expression of being normative up to the extent that the same individual could be described as ‘normal’ when using the state language or ‘ethnic’ if the minority language is used.⁶⁷ Gardner-Chloros takes a different line of thought.⁶⁸ She valuably differentiates the two concepts rationally by describing a linguistic minority as a community whose minority status is the product of political borders being redrawn like Alsace or whose language has been indigenous to the State in question, like Welsh, over a significant period of its history; whereas groups of more recent migrant origin are referred to as ethnic minorities. Although for the definition to be able to be suitably used in most cases I would have used the notion of ‘territory’ instead of restricting it to the concept of State which has more often than not political connotations. Thus the new concept would encompass a more ample territorial adscription; a region, an area, a province or even a State.

However, it is worth noting that these observations are valid mostly for western-states or any states that have benefited from world order modifications as in other parts of the

⁶⁶ Tabouret-Keller, ‘Western Europe’, p. 337.

⁶⁷ Glyn Williams, ‘Sociology’, in *Handbook of Language and Ethnic Identity*, ed. by Joshua Fishman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 176.

⁶⁸ Tabouret-Keller, ‘Western Europe’, p. 338.

world with state regimes without democratic ideals, the question of minorities including linguistic minorities is drastically different to such an extent that discrimination and even genocide on the basis of ethnic differences is still widespread.⁶⁹

By definition, minority languages are permanently at any rate at a potential risk; according to O'Reilly they tend to need special protection against national languages which do not.⁷⁰

This special protection is the reason why many European member states have signed the European Charter on Regional or Minority Languages. Although endorsing it merely signifies that its general principles are being adopted and does not involve the implementation of legal measures for their application. However its role is essential in so far as its aim is to protect regional or minority languages. This is achieved through non-discrimination, seen as an attitude instead of a rule, and the main tool is the promotion of these languages, which involves the application of specific measures so that the languages do not perish. In order to achieve this, it is the member states that decide the extent of the measures and they indicate the languages and the provision to which they subscribe for each of those languages,⁷¹ which sometimes leads to accusations of unjust preferential treatment among several languages in one given country. Although the level of protection is initially decided by the government of the ratifying countries, it is truly inspirational that subsequently it is the Council of Europe, as opposed to the governments of the

⁶⁹ Alexandre Duchêne, *Ideologies across Nations; the construction of linguistic minorities at the United Nations* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2008), p. 17.

⁷⁰ Camille O'Reilly, *Language, ethnicity and the state, Volume one: Minority languages in the European Union* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p. 93.

⁷¹ Tabouret-Keller, 'Western Europe', pp. 336-337.

petitioning countries, that secures the monitoring of the implementation in order to guarantee some kind of consistency.⁷²

The question of the protection of languages becomes more complex when the question of which language should be protected, which variety or which practice arises, and more so when the question is why these and not others, consequently making the link closer to ideological reasons and thus more arbitrary. These concerns are in turn connected to questions over legitimacy, over the criteria chosen and over who has the capacity to decide.⁷³ With so many unresolved issues to consider, what has ended up happening time and again since the 1980s is that the minorities themselves have been the ones to initiate developments in policies linked to the protection of those minority languages by organising themselves into associations, committees and by setting up campaigns.⁷⁴ This is similar to the minority movements in the sixties such as in Quebec which served as a means of unification. However, since minority language protection often puts the state in a dilemma as to whether it ought to be recognised or assimilated thus avoiding separatism or promoting diversity, and since protection is a phenomenon closely associated to specific contexts that vary greatly according to the different political, social and economic situations, it is difficult to split this protection away from the logic of the nation-state.⁷⁵ Aside from the reality that promoting minority languages nowadays, more than ever in the current climate of ethnic-based political parties, may exacerbate social divisions.⁷⁶

⁷² Leena Huss and Anna-Riitta Lindgren, 'Scandinavia', in *Handbook of language and ethnic identity: disciplinary and regional perspectives*, Volume 1, ed. by Joshua Fishman and Ofelia García (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp.255-268 (p. 267).

⁷³ Duchêne, pp. 12-13.

⁷⁴ Tabouret-Keller, 'Western Europe', p. 340.

⁷⁵ Duchêne, pp. 13-17.

⁷⁶ John Edwards, 'Contextualizing language rights', *Journal of Human Rights*, 2 (2003), 551-571.

Conversely, when the states control the protection of the languages with political reasoning behind it, and the languages are used as a discursive production thus altering the relation between linguistic minorities and the state; it leads time and again to minorisation. Insofar as language is one of the elements on the basis of which exclusion occurs and minorisation implies exclusion, since it is interpreted as a social process which creates minority groups that have less economic, social or political power than the dominant group. This process does not differentiate on the basis of numbers of speakers,⁷⁷ as clearly conveyed by the Catalan narrative where despite Catalan being the language used by a large number of speakers, it is mostly considered a minorised language due to the restriction of its domain and its functions,⁷⁸ and not a minority language – mostly in terms of the language's social implantation. As a label, however, this concept of being identified as a minorised language is often resisted against, like the nationalist Corsican movements that aim to distance themselves from that terminology⁷⁹ by, as Alonso Montero sees it,⁸⁰ showing an assertive and combative attitude to bilingualism, thus waging the battle and avoiding their future becoming bleaker by the day, which is what tends to happen when the confrontation moves beyond the strict linguistic limits.

There seems to be a general tendency towards minorisation around the globe based on situations of language subordination where the establishment of chosen national languages is premeditated and therefore other language varieties are considered to have lesser political significance and are subsequently regarded as minorised within these same nation-states. Language varieties like these are regarded as a threat to the harmony of the

⁷⁷ Donna Patrick, 'Language dominance and minorization' in *Society and Language Use: Handbook of Pragmatics*, ed. by Jürgen Jaspers, Jan-Ola Östman and Jef Verschueren (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2010), 176-191 (p. 176).

⁷⁸ Àngela Cotano, *Les llengües minoritzades d'Europa* (Barcelona: 3i4, 2000), p. 22.

⁷⁹ Duchêne, p. 15.

⁸⁰ Xesús Alonso Montero, *Cen anos de literatura galega*, (Lugo: Industrias Gráficas Bao, 1964), p. 23.

state and therefore provide grounds for the consistent lessening and outlawing of minority languages that the last three centuries of nationalism have illustrated.⁸¹ In many cases, these languages were used in regions that were formerly independent of the nation-state of which they now form part. Subsequently, when nation-states on the pursuit for homogeneity deemed monolingualism to be the natural order, and those groups that did not meet this national criterion were qualified as minorities; speakers of these minority languages found themselves zealously discouraged from using them.⁸² This would serve as an illustration of the many types of conflict between nation-states and minorities where minorities have been persecuted in the past and some continue to be so today, up to the point of being brainwashed into abandoning their cultures and languages as they were thought to be inferior, thus assuming that there was a process of assimilation and not coercion, like the situation with Saami in Finland. However, denying people the right to use their own culture and their own language does not always work, as when large sections of the population are deprived of forms of self-expression, the nation's social and political foundations are destabilised.⁸³ Fortunately, many such examples have since found some redress in the current political situation where some languages like Catalan and Welsh are now being granted official status at one level or another.

The strength or weakness of minority language settings can also be altered depending on geographical factors. These will in turn affect the political stability or instability of the different varieties. John Edwards warns that aside from a classification based on geographical contexts of minority languages, like whether or not they are used in a unique

⁸¹ Stephen May, 'Minority Rights' in *An Introduction to Language Policy: Theory and Method*, ed. by Thomas Ricento (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), p. 261-262.

⁸² Michael Hornsby and Timofey Agarin, 'The end of minority languages? Europe's regional languages in perspective', *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe*, 11.1 (2012), 90-109 (p.100).

⁸³ Nettle and Romaine, p. 21-23.

context, or whether they have a cohesive counterpart or not, social and psychological perceptions also have to be accommodated.⁸⁴ Among the social perceptions I would place highly the dominance, or lack of it, of the minority language and the attitude of the speakers towards its use.

The situation in which many minority languages find themselves, is that they are progressively more and more dominated by the official state languages and often threatened.⁸⁵ When as a result of bilingualism the majority language dominates linguistically and it becomes the norm, the result is the decline of fluent speakers, and it is in particular the appearance of this category of less than fluent speakers due to insufficient exposure and use of the minority language that will be an important factor towards the minority language erosion.⁸⁶

In these domination cases there is often relentless competition for symbolic privileges and prestige between the minority language and the officially recognised state language. However, because the resources of the state chiefly support the official language, this has consequences for all the unofficial languages and even in some cases for other official ones that are not the main state supported language, as their social status decreases and they get less financial assistance and less respect.⁸⁷ This in turn induces the minority communities to associate their disadvantaged social and economic position with their language and many come to believe that their languages are not worth retaining. The fact is that some states, like France, where there is no danger of separatism, do not look too

⁸⁴ John Edwards, *Minority Languages and Group Identity: Cases and Categories* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2010), pp. 81-82.

⁸⁵ Brezinger and de Graaf, p. 3.

⁸⁶ Raymond Mougéon and Edouard Beniak, 'Language contraction and linguistic change: the case of Welland French' in *Investigating obsolescence: Studies in language contraction and death*, ed. by Nancy Dorian (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 298-299.

⁸⁷ Nancy Dorian, 'Linguistic and Ethnographic Fieldwork', in *Handbook of Language and Ethnic Identity*, ed. by Joshua Fishman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 25-41 (p.26).

favourably upon minority languages and even some express contempt for those languages that lack or have little literary tradition, and although this contempt may be subconscious, it represents the main obstacle for these languages to be part of the mainstream national setting with all its implications.⁸⁸ Additionally, there are some detractors of proponents of language rights like John Edwards that classify as egotistical wanting to keep on using minority languages since these are themselves the obstacles for social progress. However, as May rightly refutes, wanting to maintain a minority language together with another more dominant language in fact shows evidence of a greater ability to manage multiple linguistic and cultural abilities which no doubt will be crucial for a cultural shift towards greater modernity and social progress.⁸⁹

Attitudes are also a significant component of social perception. Although Fasold states that attitudes are to be found simply in responses people make to social situations and that when referring to language attitudes they are broadened to include attitudes towards speakers of a particular language or dialect,⁹⁰ Baker indicates that the situation is different when minority languages are concerned and that when wanting to learn about the vitality of the language, even attitude surveys are not going to provide a perfect barometer, especially in terms of status, prestige and social preferences,⁹¹ as depending on whether an informant has a negative or a positive attitude towards a minority language they may be

⁸⁸ Philippe Martel, 'Minority Languages of Metropolitan France: a Long Road' in *VIII Conferencia Internacional de Linguas Minoritarias: Políticas Lingüísticas e Educativas na Europa Comunitaria*, ed. María Xesús Bugarín López and others (Santiago de Compostela: Xunta de Galicia, 2002), pp. 303-308 (p. 307).

⁸⁹ Stephen May, *Language and Minority Rights: Ethnicity, Nationalism and the Politics of Language* (Harlow: Longman, 2001), pp. 143-149.

⁹⁰ Cited in John Bellamy, *Language Attitudes in England and Austria: A Sociolinguistic Investigation into Perceptions of High and Low-Prestige Varieties in Manchester and Vienna* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2012), pp. 38-39.

⁹¹ Colin Baker, 'Psycho-Sociological Analysis in Language Policy' in *An Introduction to Language Policy: Theory and Method*, ed. by Thomas Ricento (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), pp. 210-211.

inclined to identify themselves with the language and to assess their knowledge of it either in a levelling or an intensifying manner.⁹²

This point certainly ascertains the common situation found among speakers of minority languages and it confirms the findings of Huss and Lindgren in the Nordic countries, where when a favourable self-image has been built among linguistic minorities, it has counteracted negative attitudes towards the use of the minority language and it has made the majorities more respectful of the minorities and their revitalisation efforts.⁹³ In Wales however, the majority-language speakers' attitudes have shown the opposite picture, where Welsh language is seen as an imposition and some English language speakers reveal their unwillingness to learn Welsh demonstrating their sense of entitlement to individual language rights. This type of situation is a reflection of the ongoing frictions typical of a contested social reality in the legitimisation context of minority languages.⁹⁴

⁹² Simone Zwickl, *Language Attitudes, Ethnic Identity and Dialect Use across the Northern Ireland Border: Armagh and Monaghan* (Belfast: Queen's University Belfast, 2002), p.197.

⁹³ Huss and Lindgren, p. 264.

⁹⁴ May, *Language and Minority Rights*, pp. 270-271.

1.3 Language, identity and nationalism

The following detailed description by William Safran of what language represents provides a good example of the links between language, identity and nationalism:

“Language is an important marker of individual and collective identity and the most essential tool for expressing thoughts and feelings. As such, it has played a role in the perpetuation of a community’s culture, in social communication and mobilisation, in nation-building and in the quest for political independence”.⁹⁵

As far as the concept of identity is concerned, Derrida maintains that the construction of an identity is always based on the exclusion of something and thus a hierarchy between the two views that are opposed to each other is established, the second view is then reduced to functioning as an accident as opposed to the essential character of the first one.⁹⁶ Therefore, following this characterisation, it is clear that the choice of language used is one form of expressing identity. Along that line of thought, Chambers explains how speech is an unconscious way to express our social background and it is much more revealing of our identity because it is much less manipulable.⁹⁷ Thus language can be considered as an identity marker which carries extensive cultural content,⁹⁸ and, by and large, as Tabouret-Keller observes, it represents an external behaviour that allows the identification of speakers as members of a group.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ William Safran, ‘Political Science and Politics’, in *Handbook of Language and Ethnic Identity: Disciplinary and Regional Perspectives*, ed. by Joshua Fishman and Ofelia García (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 49-69 (p. 49).

⁹⁶ Cited in Stuart Hall, ‘Introduction: Who Needs “Identity”?’ in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. by Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (London: SAGE, 1996), pp. 1-17 (pp. 1-5).

⁹⁷ Jack K. Chambers, *Sociolinguistic Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995) p.7.

⁹⁸ Dorian, ‘Linguistic and Ethnographic Fieldwork’, p. 31.

⁹⁹ Andrée Tabouret-Keller, ‘Language and Identity’ in *The Handbook of Sociolinguistics* ed. by Florian Coulmas (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), p. 315.

Exploring the function of language as a marker of identity in political contexts, Myhill observed the separation between the concept of language as identity, which emphasises 'the inherent emotional and spiritual connection between a person and his/her native language' and language and territory, which emphasises 'a connection such that in each territory a particular language should be the one generally used in public circumstances and intergroup communication'.¹⁰⁰

The situation experienced in Wales is an example of language seen as a marker of identity as the Welsh language has evolved to become a potent symbol of national identity.¹⁰¹ The opposing situation would be the one experienced by Breton or Irish where language has generally not been seen as an important element in national identity, and particularly in the Irish movement the promotion of the language did not commence until the language had in all probability irretrievably declined.¹⁰² This lack of connection between language and identity is common even with minority languages that enjoy numerous speakers, like Basque where only 21% of adolescents in the Basque Country believe that to speak Basque is considered necessary in order to be Basque¹⁰³ and surprisingly, among the much larger number of Catalan speakers, in Catalonia, where young people are said to be

¹⁰⁰ John Myhill, 'Identity, Territoriality and Minority Language Survival', *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 20 (1999) 34-50 (p. 34).

¹⁰¹ Stephen Barbour, 'Language and nationalism: Britain and Ireland, and the German-speaking area' in *The changing voices of Europe: Social and political changes and their linguistic repercussions past, present and future* ed. by Mair M. Parry, Winifred V. Davies & Rosalind A. M. Temple (Cardiff. University of Wales Press & HMRA, 1994), p.328.

¹⁰² Barbour, p. 329.

¹⁰³ Fishman, *Reversing Language Shift*, p. 152.

indifferent to language choice,¹⁰⁴ and only 43.5% of the population consider the language to be necessary in order to be Catalan.¹⁰⁵

Besides, language is a symbol of other functions, as Fasold explains, it purposefully represents unifying and separatist functions in terms of the feelings of the members of a nationality in that “they are united and identified with others who speak the same language, and contrast with and are separated from those who do not”.¹⁰⁶ However, the relationship of language and nationalism has been a matter of controversy for a long time, as it is either considered that language does not necessarily have a political dimension, or conversely it is regarded as a major building block for nations. Language is nevertheless important for political scientists as it plays a part in the ‘politicisation’ of nationalisms that develop into states.¹⁰⁷ A case in point is that of Catalonia, which can also be considered as an extraordinary example of linguistic loyalty, since the Catalan language stands as one of the main pillars of collective identity which in turn determines to a greater extent critical political attitudes and as a result, specific electoral behaviour.¹⁰⁸ This behaviour can lead to the objective shared with many ‘periphery nationalisms’ of aiming to put an end to their status of being a ‘nation without a state’.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁴ Kathryn Woolard, ‘Language and Identity Choice in Catalonia: the Interplay of Contrasting Ideologies of Linguistic Authority’ in *Lengua, nación e identidad: La regulación del plurilingüismo en España y América Latina*, ed. by Kirsten Süselbeck and others (Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2008), pp. 303-323.

¹⁰⁵ José Luis Blas Arroyo, ‘Variación lingüística e identidad en la España plurilingüe: una aproximación multidisciplinar’ in *Selected Proceedings of the 4th Workshop on Spanish Sociolinguistics*, ed. by Maurice Westmoreland and Juan Antonio Thomas (Somerville: Cascadia Proceedings Project, 2008), pp.1-16.

¹⁰⁶ Ralph Fasold, *The Sociolinguistics of Society Vol.1* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), p. 3.

¹⁰⁷ William Safran, ‘Nationalism’ in *Handbook of Language and Ethnic Identity* ed. by Joshua Fishman, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 77- 93, (p. 77).

¹⁰⁸ Andrés Barrera González, ‘Lengua, Identidad y Nacionalismo en Cataluña durante la Transición’, *Revista de Antropología Social*, 6 (1997), 109-137.

¹⁰⁹ Torcuato Pérez de Guzmán, ‘Dialecto e Identidad Colectiva: los Casos del País Valenciano y Andalucía’, *Revista de Antropología Social*, 6 (1997), 39-163.

From the point of view of nationalism, when state and nation coincide, a state is seen as a political extension of the nation, and although defining the nation is difficult as its essence is not concrete, when the borders of a territorial-political unit coincide with the territorial distribution of a national group this gives place to a nation-state.¹¹⁰

From the ideological viewpoint of nationalism whereby nation-states 'remain the bedrock of the political world order' they represent in political terms the victory of universalism over particularism and as such they symbolise progress and modernity. In terms of language, this involves the selection of one common language formally recognised by the nation-state and as such they are the product of the nationalisms of the last few centuries. This model of linguistic homogeneity and political nationalism is built on the notion of nation-state congruence whereby the confines of national and political identity should match. However, from an ethnicist point of view the legal and political dimensions do not converge with the historical and cultural dimensions and the state is not the political extension of the nation.¹¹¹ This divergence can be seen in the varying feelings towards the French state from someone from mainland France compared with someone in Corsica. It may be the case that at the present time there are few pure nation-states, as there are always residents and citizens that do not identify themselves as members of the dominant national collective.¹¹² Among many of these, are those in the minority languages communities that exist alongside the state's official standard national language, and for

¹¹⁰ Walker Connor, 'A Nation is a Nation, is a State, is an Ethnic Group, is a...' in *Nationalism*, ed. by John Hutchinson and Anthony Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 36-46, (pp. 37-39).

¹¹¹ May, *Language and Minority Rights*, pp. 4-9 & 71-79.

¹¹² Anthias and Yuval Davies cited in May, *Language and Minority Rights*, p. 76.

whom according to Dorian, the nation-state has “in modern times posed the keenest threats to both [their] identities and [their] languages”¹¹³ since they do not want to be part of the homogeneity of the nation-state and thus in turn, they themselves pose a separatist threat.

In the last three centuries the theories of nationalism have abounded and although there is no agreement about a particular theory, there are several theories which can paint a picture of what nationalism entails. Stalin, one of the most influential men of the last century, provided a characterisation of nation which has had some bearing on many a nationalism definition. He argues that a nation comes into existence only when a number of elements are combined, especially territory, economic life and language,¹¹⁴ although many others also include the concept of community and its innate characteristics as well as a political aim.

Eric Hobsbawm and Benedict Anderson believe respectively that a nation is one of many traditions invented by political elites¹¹⁵ and an imagined political community,¹¹⁶ and that nation and nationalism are a product of modernity, created with a political or economic objective.

On the other hand Elie Kedourie defends that humanity is instinctively divided into nations that act as a homogenising force and that “National self-determination is [...] a

¹¹³ Dorian, ‘Western language ideologies’, p. 67.

¹¹⁴ Joseph Stalin, ‘The Nation’ in *Nationalism*, ed. by John Hutchinson and Anthony Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 18-20.

¹¹⁵ Eric Hobsbawm, ‘The Nation as Invented Tradition’ in *Nationalism*, ed. by John Hutchinson and Anthony Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 76-82.

¹¹⁶ Benedict Anderson, ‘Imagined communities’ in *Nationalism*, ed. by John Hutchinson and Anthony Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 89-95.

determination of the will; and nationalism is, in the first place, a method of teaching the right determination of the will.”¹¹⁷

In opposition, Gellner, alongside the modernist ideas of Hobsbawm and Anderson, argues that it is not the ideas that act as harmonisers but that it is the needs of modern societies of cultural homogeneity that lead to nationalism.¹¹⁸ He also makes a connection between nationalism, language and statehood by writing that nationalism is a principle that sustains that the national unit and the political unit ought to be congruent as well as defining the national unit in terms of language.¹¹⁹

The significance in these definitions is the reference to the political aspects of nationalism which can even lead as Kedourie proposes to self-determination.

Alongside the previous theories, and in conjunction with the political nationalism widespread in post-colonial states, Clifford Geertz indicates that there are two opposing and at the same time complementary components of nationalism; ethnic and civic. The ethnic involves a responsibility to ‘primordial’ loyalties which bestow individuals with a distinct identity and the civic, an aspiration to be a citizen in a modern state.¹²⁰ Thus, ethnic nationalism would entail an understanding of identity based on cultural properties, like a native language, and civic nationalism would entail involvement in civil society and

¹¹⁷ Elie Kedourie, ‘Nationalism and Self-Determination’ in *Nationalism*, ed. by John Hutchinson and Anthony Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 54.

¹¹⁸ Ernest Gellner, ‘Nationalism and Modernization’ in *Nationalism*, ed. by John Hutchinson and Anthony Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 55-62.

¹¹⁹ Cited in Safran, ‘Nationalism’, p. 77.

¹²⁰ Clifford Geertz, ‘Primordial and Civic Ties’ in *Nationalism*, ed. by John Hutchinson and Anthony Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp- 29-33.

in political institutions.¹²¹ These primordialist concepts are inspired by the ideas of German romanticism where nations are a natural phenomenon with cultural and blood links that emphasise the formation of a collective will towards nationhood and promulgate the role of language, territory and culture in the shaping of national consciousness and to form the spirit that defines the nation.¹²²

The almost symbiotic relationship between language and nationalism is far from being a new phenomenon, given that states have regularly engaged in the process of nation-building which has been seen as a process of promoting a common language to reflect a sense of common membership.¹²³ In fact, since the seventeenth century, the magnitude of the nationalist phenomena has based itself on the characteristics of political regimes. Historically, when a State is being formed, the elite, with the purpose of making the group feel united, also often seek to create the group's own identity based on a homogeneous national culture, so that people can become conscious of their identity. In order to enhance a collective belonging culture, frequently, a linguistic variety evolves alongside the history of the State. Through this establishment and promotion of a common language, the nation-state amalgamates the cultural and the political dimensions of nationhood.¹²⁴ For instance, for Germans and Italians in the first half of the nineteenth century, their national language was even more than just the instrument of expression and of a prominent literature; it was the only thing that made these people Germans or Italians and it carried a

¹²¹ Joan Pujolar, 'The Future of Catalan: Language Endangerment and nationalist discourses in Catalonia' in *Discourses of Endangerment: Ideology and Interest in the Defence of Languages*, ed. by Monica Heller and Alexandre Duchêne (2008), pp. 121-148 (p. 125).

¹²² Safran, 'Political Science and Politics', pp. 49-50.

¹²³ Will Kymlicka, *Contemporary political philosophy. An introduction* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 347.

¹²⁴ May, *Language and Minority Rights*, p. 55.

heavy charge of national identity. Thus, for the German and Italian elite, language provided a central argument for the creation of a unified national State. Their guiding principle was closely connected with what is commonly known as the Herderian concept of language that is the equation of spirit of the people, language and nation.¹²⁵ However, language is not always the only core value to identity, although it is common in Europe; in other parts of the world ethnicity or religion have preference over linguistic considerations;¹²⁶ in fact, the most obvious difference between the nationalism that developed in the Basque Country and Catalonia, was the different levels of importance given to the language in constructing their identity. Conversi notes that the Catalan academic world has repeatedly revived the German romantic Herderian link from several perspectives in addition to what academia and political parties on all sides of the spectrum have done for the language.¹²⁷ In Catalonia there were obvious links between language and thought, although it can hardly be traced back further than the 1850s.¹²⁸ On the other hand, the Basque language was scarcely spoken in urban areas or by the elite and while it undeniably was middle class intellectuals who wished the Basque identity to be revived, it was the 'pure' Basque of the isolated rural areas on whom they were dependent as their foundation. In this case, political expressions of identity preceded cultural and language revivals.¹²⁹ It seems as if the frequent attacks throughout the decades on the Basque sense of distinct nationhood may have had the opposite effect, resulting in enhanced awareness

¹²⁵ Dorian, 'Western language ideologies', p. 98.

¹²⁶ Ángel López García, *Babel Airada: Las lenguas en el Transfondo de la Supuesta Ruptura de España* (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2004), p. 31.

¹²⁷ Cited in Clare Mar-Molinero, 'The Role of Language in Spanish Nation-Building' in *Nationalism and the nation in the Iberian Peninsula: competing and conflicting identities*, ed. by Clare Mar-Molinero and Angel Smith (Oxford: Berg, 1996), pp. 77-85.

¹²⁸ Eric Hobsbawm, 'The rise of ethno-linguistic nationalisms' in *Nationalism*, ed. by John Hutchinson and Anthony Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p.181.

¹²⁹ Mar-Molinero, 'The Role of Language', pp. 78-80.

of their political identity, which subsequently led to their language resurgence.¹³⁰ This perspective is analogous to the political nationalist motivation often found in the promotion of minority languages, unlike cultural nationalisms which are concerned predominantly with what constitutes national identity,¹³¹ and which Hutchinson states are principally concerned with the reconstruction of tradition.¹³² In practice, this has been the case in Scotland since Scottish nationalism has historically sought its legitimacy for the most part in ‘cultural continuity’ together with collective memory and common history as the promotion of Scottish culture as well as its associated traditions. This is what has been viewed as central to the essence of the Scottish nation.¹³³

During the last few decades the European Union has placed an increased emphasis on regional autonomy and hence the term regionalism in the framework of political aspirations has become more frequent. Grin states that when choosing the term ‘region’ there is a definite stress on a geographical association,¹³⁴ and this is complemented by the view of Lane and Ersson who state that regional identities normally include issues linked to socio-economic structure, as well as religion, ethnicity and ideology, supplemented by political activity which derives from a view of sub-national territoriality.¹³⁵ These issues which are identified with the term ‘regionalism’ often develop into the centre of attention

¹³⁰ Kymlicka, p. 351.

¹³¹ May, *Language and Minority Rights*, p. 78.

¹³² John Hutchinson, ‘Cultural Nationalism and Moral Regeneration’ in *Nationalism*, ed. by John Hutchinson and Anthony Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp.122-131, (p. 123).

¹³³ May, *Language and Minority Rights*, pp. 57-61.

¹³⁴ Grin, p. 20.

¹³⁵ Cited in Murphy, Brendan, Cristina Diaz-Varela and Salvatore Coluccello, ‘Transformation of the State in Western Europe: Regionalism in Catalonia and Northern Italy’ in *Beyond Boundaries. Language and Identity in Contemporary Europe* ed. by Paul Gubbins and Mike Holt (Clevedon: MultilingualMatters, 2002), p. 77.

for political activity and demand for autonomy and even independence for the regions in question.¹³⁶

In terms of political ambitions of linguistic minorities, the term ‘nationalism’ is also used and identified with the aspirations that sub state level communities exhibit. These ‘national’ communities are set apart by their revived self-consciousness and cultural awakening.¹³⁷

However, Skutnabb-Kangas has commented on the fear that the existence of unassimilated minority groups cause, since they represent the existence of several ‘nations’ within the framework of the ‘greater’ nation which is seen as an indication of a complete or partial collapse of the nation-state.¹³⁸ Thus, different countries like France have throughout the years taken measures to eliminate any sense of distinct national identity, which was justified on the basis that minorities that regard themselves as distinct ‘nations’ would potentially be disloyal, and could be classified as embryonic secessionists.¹³⁹ In fact, the nationalistic feelings expressed by these linguistic minorities have often found enemies and are resented by some authors like Lodaes who compares the ideas expressed by Hitler in *Mein Kampf* to those expressed in some circles of Catalan and Basque nationalism.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ Beswick, p. 31.

¹³⁷ Clare Mar-Molinero, *The Politics of Language in the Spanish-Speaking World* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2000), p. 12.

¹³⁸ Cited in Beswick, p. 30.

¹³⁹ Kymlicka, p. 351.

¹⁴⁰ Juan Ramón Lodaes, *Lengua y patria: sobre el nacionalismo lingüístico en España* (Madrid: Taurus, 2002), p. 184.

Issues with endangered languages remain largely a matter for nation states since they tend to be shaped by national concerns and constructed at the national level. This provides openings for language legitimisation claims which have been taken by organisations in order to reorganise political relations with the state.¹⁴¹

It is thus clear that the role of language in relation to identity and to nationalism varies greatly and in the case of minority languages it is inevitably linked to political nationalism. That is why everyday linguistic choices have a profound effect on defining a nation.

¹⁴¹ Donna Patrick, 'Indigenous Language Endangerment and the Unfinished Business of Nation States' in *Discourses of Endangerment: Ideology and Interest in the Defence of Languages*, ed. by Monica Heller and Alexandre Duchêne (London: Continuum International, 2007), pp. 35-36.

1.4 Language rights

Despite considerable progress in recent times in the field of human rights, the right to preserve one's language without suffering discrimination is still not fully represented as a significant human right. In all probability, due to the fact that if language rights are recognised as such, there is then an implicit recognition of the “importance of wider group membership and social context”.¹⁴² Since language can be a crucial factor in the interaction between dominance and power, it often plays a role in the perpetuation of social inequity and time and time again community members are deprived of access to economic or social commodities as a result of their choice of language; the critical response to this linguistic discrimination would be to call for the proper recognition of language rights.¹⁴³

According to Wee's interpretation, the aim of language rights is to represent a legally enforceable principle where the responsibility to ensure that official recognition and resources are distributed to minority languages and their speakers falls predominantly on governing states and various other institutions.¹⁴⁴ Accordingly the demand for language rights is frequently motivated in order to safeguard the interests of minority language groups, often as a consequence of a dominant language being present.

Nowadays many communities are becoming conscious of linguistic rights and are starting to assert them; national minorities which often have access to qualitatively greater language rights than other minority groups are supported by language activists who seem

¹⁴² Stephen May, 'Language Rights as Human Rights', *Revista de Antropología Social*, 19 (2010), 131-159 (p.131).

¹⁴³ Lionel Wee, *Language without rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), p.3.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

to be the most vocal advocates of the rights, together with sociologists, linguists, political philosophers and policy makers.¹⁴⁵

The latest trend in public sympathy towards cultural and linguistic rights has led to indigenous and minority languages benefiting in many parts of the world. In Europe, great progress was made when the Council of Europe adopted the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in the form of a convention, signed in November 1992 and coming into force in March 1998. As a convention, it is legally binding, and minority languages are offered a considerable level of protection. Seven countries ratified it at the outset and others like Spain endorsed it later.¹⁴⁶

Previously, in 1982, a colloquium with participants from lesser used language communities led to the establishment of the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages. The Bureau's general purpose is to conserve and to promote the lesser used autochthonous languages of the European Union and their associated cultures. This organisation has committees in most of the EU member states.¹⁴⁷

The most significant result of activities concerning linguistic rights is possibly the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights in June 1996 and the subsequent publication of the book 'Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights' in 1998. This declaration is built on the basic tenet of equality of all people and languages, defending that linguistic features do not justify any kind of prejudice and there is equal entitlement to the same rights for all linguistic communities. However, the likelihood of this Declaration being officially endorsed by governments does not seem to be very high

¹⁴⁵ Tsunoda, p. 143.

¹⁴⁶ David Crystal, *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics, Sixth Edition* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003).

¹⁴⁷ Dónall Ó Riagáin, 'The European Union and Lesser Used Languages', *Journal on Multicultural Societies (MOST)*, 3 (2001), 1, p. 12.

as many governments do not appear to be particularly troubled about minority people's rights and in contrast seem more concerned about how costly the execution of the Declaration would be.¹⁴⁸

Regrettably the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights, in the same fashion as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is mostly a symbolic document whose conditions are not enforceable and which contains predominantly elements based on intentions as opposed to being based on particular observations of rights; hence the difficulty in enforcing the principles.¹⁴⁹ If, in spite of this, the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights attracted a greater consideration by all the parties involved, it would guarantee that everyone had "the right to identify with his or her mother tongue and have this identification accepted and respected by others".¹⁵⁰

When seeking to respond to the social necessity that involves the coexistence of different languages or varieties, in which undoubtedly one or more of them will be an indigenous or minority language, the interface between language rights and language policy will need to be considered. This would mean that the protection of those minorities and languages would be provided through the intermediaries of law, language planning and language policies.¹⁵¹

To this end, Nettle and Romaine propose establishing language policies on a local, regional and international level that represent the principle of linguistic human rights through the setting up of agencies that would work for language maintenance and development where they are not yet present.¹⁵² As an example of this practice, there are

¹⁴⁸ Tsunoda, pp. 143-146.

¹⁴⁹ Duchêne, p. 248.

¹⁵⁰ Nettle and Romaine, p. 200.

¹⁵¹ Duchêne, p. 6.

¹⁵² Nettle and Romaine, pp. 200-201.

activists in New Zealand and in Panama who have linked the battle for language rights with natural resource management.

Additionally, Romaine has commented, when analysing endangered languages and language policy, on the irrationality of language policy statements and the fact that it is often when languages are virtually extinct and do not present a threat to anybody, that they are awarded special status.¹⁵³ As an example of such a policy statement lacking a planning element and covering languages that are on the verge of extinction, she offers the Native American Languages Act (NALA) which states that the responsibility to act together with Native Americans as well as to guarantee the survival of these unique languages and cultures falls on the United States. They are also to be held accountable in terms of protecting, preserving and promoting the rights of Native Americans to practice, use and develop Native American Languages.

However, there is an important distinction to be made between legislating for the protection and use of languages and guaranteeing their maintenance and the equitable treatment of their speakers.¹⁵⁴ McCarty and Watahomigie fittingly observe that “in practice, language rights have not guaranteed language maintenance, which ultimately depends on the home language choices of native speakers. Such decisions are notoriously difficult for extra-familial institutions to control, even when those institutions are community controlled”.¹⁵⁵

Nevertheless, once the need for legislation is accepted, several factors would need to be taken into account, such as the need for ‘positive’ rights as well as ‘negative’ rights which

¹⁵³ Romaine, p. 195.

¹⁵⁴ Romaine, pp. 194-212.

¹⁵⁵ Teresa McCarty and Lucille Watahomigie, *Indigenous community-based language education in the USA*. Language, Culture and Curriculum, Special issue on Indigenous Community-Based Education, ed. by S. May, (1998), 11 (3) pp. 309-325.

are commonplace in the Declarations, Conventions or Covenants where states have to ‘abstain from acting in certain ways’.¹⁵⁶ ‘Positive’ rights are largely related to language rights in that their full exercise requires the language to be considered appropriate for different domains and therefore the state would have to engage in action, for instance, taking appropriate steps for the maintenance of the languages.¹⁵⁷ In addition to the decision as to whether what needed to be protected were the language or the members of the community, Duchêne considers the language as the object of protection and argues that as clear boundaries exist between languages, and their vitality can be promoted as well as their disappearance prevented, hence language can be considered as an object.¹⁵⁸ Therefore language is what needs to be protected in particular. Thus, if there is protection for the language, individuals and groups will also then be protected. In contrast, on objectifying language, Wee claims that treating the language as the object of a right would require the homogenisation of what are in reality variable practices across individuals, thus exposing the fact that there would be difficulties implicated in that process like the fact that when a language is enshrined as the object of a right, it achieves a solidity that can be considerably inconsistent with the real experiences of its speakers.¹⁵⁹ This resonates with Blommaert’s experiences of language use in Tanzania which “yield disturbingly complex results” and reveal the mapping of language form over function at very local levels.¹⁶⁰ Grin claims that the subject of the rights should be the members of the community who are the ones who use the language traditionally.¹⁶¹ His opinion extends

¹⁵⁶ Grin, p. 81.

¹⁵⁷ Grin, p. 82.

¹⁵⁸ Duchêne, pp. 7-8.

¹⁵⁹ Wee, pp. 24-47.

¹⁶⁰ Jan Blommaert, ‘Situating Language Rights: English and Swahili in Tanzania Revisited’, *Working Papers in Urban Language and Literacies*, 23 (2003) 2-26, (p. 20).

¹⁶¹ Grin, pp. 24-25 & 84.

the argument, since it is clear from the work of Blommaert and others that the artificial imposition of permanent clear boundaries between languages is overly simplistic and not always objectively present.

Besides the previous argument there is also much debate about language rights being individual or collective rights. Since the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights takes as its departure point the principle that “linguistic rights are individual and collective at one and the same time”¹⁶², May provides examples of language rights being attached both to individuals or to a community. He points out that after the Second World War, human rights turned into individual rights almost exclusively, although the right to maintain a minority language has for a time been conveyed in the political arena based on the fact that language constitutes a collective benefit of a particular linguistic community.¹⁶³ Hamel agrees with May in the transition from the individual to the collective rights, although he also identifies the controversy attached to collective rights as they conflict with individual rights in judicial, ethical and philosophical matters.¹⁶⁴

Reflecting individual and collective rights, language equality can also be granted through the ‘territorial language principle’ and the ‘personality language principle’. Minority Language Rights have been contemplated and even implemented on the territorial language principle, which involves rights that are limited to a specific territory in order to secure the maintenance in that area of a particular language. This usually involves a majority language in conjunction with a minority language in the public domain in a specific territory as in the case of Belgium with equal status for Flemish speakers and in Switzerland. The personality language principle which means that regardless of their

¹⁶² Tsunoda, p. 144.

¹⁶³ May, *Language and Minority Rights*, pp. 121-122 & 179.

¹⁶⁴ Cited in Mar-Molinero, *The Politics of Language*, p. 69.

geographical position, the rights of the individual will be acknowledged, has also been applied in Canada with a greater or lesser degree of success. For speakers of French outside of Quebec, language rights are only granted if there are sufficient language speakers so that language protection can be justified.¹⁶⁵ This would mean having to opt out of the majority language in favour of the less prestigious one which is unlikely to succeed as it ends up being impractical. The territorial language principle is the one that speakers of languages that are not recognised as a means of governance have used when seeking support, as is the case of many minority languages in the EU. This is due to the fact that the logic of linguistic territorialisation has long been supported by the European Union and also by the majority of nation-states worldwide as it is believed to be the best way to realize linguistic justice. However, it has also been criticised on language identity grounds as it is said to dismiss “the importance of linguistic identity in each individual’s life”¹⁶⁶ as well as on being a principle that neglects linguistic pluralism by excluding multilingual situations which do not seem to fit into the frame and are replaced by monolingual solutions.¹⁶⁷ Subsequently, the option seems to be that self-government territorial units should not be monolingual and a practicable answer would be a personality principle that incorporates some of the facets of the territorial principle thus generating a manner of territorial linguistic diversity that would constitute a by-product of the pursuit of linguistic justice.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁵ Stephen May, ‘Language Rights: Moving the debate forward’, *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 9/3 (2005), 319-347, (p. 325).

¹⁶⁶ Hornsby and Agarin, pp. 109-110.

¹⁶⁷ Helde De Schutter, ‘The Linguistic Territoriality Principle – A Critique’, *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 25-2 (2008), 105-120.

¹⁶⁸ Philippe Van Parijs, ‘Linguistic Diversity as Curse and as By-product’, in *Respecting Linguistic Diversity in the European Union*, ed. by Xabier Arzoz (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2007), pp.17-46.

One of the reasons provided time and again as to why language rights are needed is that in an ethnolinguistically varied society, not all groups are expected to enjoy either the same protection and respect for their cultural identities, or the same access to involvement in society.¹⁶⁹ Accordingly, different language rights can be presented to minority groups, namely what May describes as “tolerance-oriented rights”,¹⁷⁰ where they would enjoy the right to use their language in their homes, which many language rights advocates rightly believe are needed alongside “promotion-oriented rights”.¹⁷¹ These correspond reasonably closely to what Skutnabb-Kangas has called "necessary" and "enrichment-oriented" rights.¹⁷² The promotion-oriented rights could be identified with an awareness of language as a marker of identity, used to underpin that notion in many regions.¹⁷³ Accordingly, in order for the use of their language in various public domains not to be hampered, active support would be needed.¹⁷⁴ Besides, the tolerance-oriented rights conversely identified with an involved interest in language as a process of communication frequently include a particular form of active state support especially within the realm of education.¹⁷⁵

Education is one of the concerns of the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights; for instance, in article twenty three where education is heralded as a way to develop and maintain the language spoken by the language community.¹⁷⁶

However, Skutnabb-Kangas claims that as far as the disappearance of indigenous and minority languages is concerned, education is one of the most significant direct causal

¹⁶⁹ Wee, p. 48.

¹⁷⁰ May, *Language and Minority Rights*, p. 13.

¹⁷¹ Wee, p. 48.

¹⁷² Skutnabb-Kangas, *Linguistic Genocide*, p. 38.

¹⁷³ Beswick, p. 71.

¹⁷⁴ Kloss in Wee, p. 48.

¹⁷⁵ May, *Language and Minority Rights*, p. 13.

¹⁷⁶ Tsunoda, pp. 144-145.

factors.¹⁷⁷ She adds that this language shift tends to be imposed by the social, political and economic challenges confronting the use of their mother tongue as the denial of the need for language education for minority languages since these are dismissed as obstacles to social mobility.¹⁷⁸ In that kind of situation alternatives often do not exist and parents do not have adequate concrete research-based information at hand about the enduring consequences of choosing not to pass on or encourage the learning of their mother tongue. Thus the linguistic right of education can be seen as a need, and conversely as a hindrance if not managed properly. Despite the fact that introducing a rights-based discourse into education has been identified as a way to address systemic inequities,¹⁷⁹ Skutnabb-Kangas claims that the education of minorities in many countries, due to the wrong choice of medium of education, is organised using methods like offering schooling through the medium of the dominant state or official language that counteract fundamental linguistic and other human rights.¹⁸⁰

Despite all the previous defence of linguistic rights, Nettle and Romaine claim that there are some who still regard the concept of language rights as regressive because they are perceived as supporting the persistence of ethnic variation, leading to antagonisms. However, Kymlicka argues that the result of external protection, often the case of linguistic rights, does not need to be injustice;¹⁸¹ in fact, awarding special language rights to a minority should not put it in a position to dominate other groups. As a matter of fact these rights, by reconsidering the social and political organisation at all levels, put the different groups on a more equal footing. In my view the long term preservation of

¹⁷⁷ Skutnabb-Kangas, *Linguistic Genocide*, pp. 36-38.

¹⁷⁸ Wee, p. 145.

¹⁷⁹ Wee, p. 84.

¹⁸⁰ Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, Linguistic human rights, are you naïve or what? *TESOL Journal*, Volume 8 (1999) 3, pp. 6-12.

¹⁸¹ Kymlicka in May, *Language and Minority Rights*, p. 120.

indigenous and minority languages is a good thing in itself, language rights ought to be recognised as human rights and I would therefore endorse the promotion and protection of indigenous or minority languages as a suitable political and social goal.

1.5 Language policy and language planning

Both political development and language policy have for a long time been subjects of decision making by governing leaders, even if they had not been formally studied by political scientists and linguists. It is easy to find situations where a language has been made official or the way it is written has been changed in order to mobilize sizeable groups of people to support or challenge a sense of belonging to a community. This shows that key political processes and political change can be influenced by a study of language choice and its implementation, which in turn illustrates how language policy and language planning are in no way peripheral to politics or to public policy making.¹⁸² Moreover, it proves the inextricable link between politics and language use and language practices.¹⁸³

The field of language planning and language policy has been studied now for more than four decades and it has given rise to multiple publications in which policy and planning questions are regularly addressed as well as an extensive body of literature. However, historically some ambiguities have surrounded the meaning of the concepts of language planning and language policy. It is difficult to elucidate unquestioned definitions when the field of enquiry is so large and incorporates a myriad of sub-themes and therefore there have always been differences between authors.

The definition and aims of language planning have been extensively considered and debated since it is a comparatively new addition to the field of linguistics as an academic discipline. Haugen first defined it as “the activity of preparing a normative orthography, grammar, and dictionary for the guidance of writers and speakers in a non-homogeneous

¹⁸² Brian Weinstein, ‘Language Policy and Political Development: An Overview’, in *Language Policy and Political Development*, ed. by Brian Weinstein (Norwood: Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1990), pp. 1-22 (p. 1).

¹⁸³ Mar-Molinero, *The Politics of Language*, p. 192.

speech community”,¹⁸⁴ thus formally categorising it as a scientific discipline although it referred to activities that had already been treated in a wide range of scholarly disciplines long before then. Later it was superseded by his own modifications as he stated:

“I defined language planning as ‘the activity of preparing a normative orthography, grammar, and dictionary for the guidance of writers and speakers in a non-homogeneous speech community’ I would now prefer to regard this as one of the outcomes of language planning, a part of the implementation of the decisions made by the language planners. The heart of language planning is rather what I referred to as the ‘exercise of judgement in the form of choices among available linguistic forms’”¹⁸⁵

However, although many definitions have been proposed throughout the years, the one most commonly accepted is Cooper’s definition where he agrees that it implies:

“Deliberate efforts to influence the behaviour of others with respect to the acquisition, structure or functional allocation of their language codes”¹⁸⁶

The definition of language policy has also evolved according to developments in the field. The most commonly found template is the one articulated by Cooper in which he states that language policy can be organised around the question: “What *actors* attempt to influence what *behaviors* of which *people* for what *ends* under what *conditions* by what *means* through what *decision-making process* with what *effect*?”¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁴ Einar Haugen, ‘Planning for a Standard Language in Modern Norway’, *Anthropological Linguistics*, 1-3 (1959) 8-21 (p.8).

¹⁸⁵ Einar Haugen, ‘Language Conflict and Language Planning’, in *Sociolinguistics*, ed. by William Bright (The Hague: Mouton, 1966), p.51.

¹⁸⁶ Robert Cooper, *Language Planning and Social Change*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1989), p. 45.

¹⁸⁷ Cooper, p. 98.

Kaplan and Baldauf Jr later described language policy in a more embracing manner as ‘a body of ideas, laws, regulations, rules, procedures, and practices intended to achieve the objectives of a policy’¹⁸⁸

Following a more detailed review, Grin devised a rather more complete definition based on the functions of language in society, which was a compilation of previous ones:

“Language policy is a systematic, rational, theory-based effort at the societal level to modify the linguistic environment with a view to increasing aggregate welfare. It is typically conducted by official bodies or their surrogates and aimed at part or all of the population living under their jurisdiction”¹⁸⁹

It is worth noting that he clearly views language policy as a form of public policy under the responsibility of the state and this is emphasised by his use of the word ‘societal’. ‘Aggregate welfare’ can be understood in terms of the conditions necessary for a higher quality of life which is obtained through the preservation of a diverse linguistic milieu, as opposed to its replacement by a unilingual environment.

However, there is a certain amount of overlap between the use of the terms ‘language policy’ and ‘language planning’. In fact Schiffman states that since policy and planning can, and often do, feed into each other, it means that they are at times ‘treated as one’ in the relevant literature.¹⁹⁰ In fact, out of the two, the term that tends to be used more broadly is often ‘language policy’.¹⁹¹ However, after seeing the different definitions and, together with the examples of their aims and strategies, it is clear that the distinction

¹⁸⁸ Robert Kaplan and Richard Baldauf Jr, *Language and Language- in- Education Planning in the Pacific Basin* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 2003), p.6.

¹⁸⁹ Grin, p. 30.

¹⁹⁰ Harold Schiffman, *Linguistic Culture and Language Policy* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 3.

¹⁹¹ Grin, p. 28.

between the two terms cannot be understated as they are both complex entities in themselves.

Language policy tends to be located at a general wide-ranging level as well as emphasising intervention when referring to the position of a language in relation to other languages.¹⁹² Moreover, when placed in a political and state associated framework, it involves the development of public policies that intend to use the power and authority of the state to influence the status and the use of languages.¹⁹³ However, it has to be taken into account that the existence of a policy on language use does not necessarily imply its implementation; this is often attributable to the fact that although the goals of a language policy tend to be either overt or covert, these can and do coexist and conflict.¹⁹⁴ Schiffman indicates that an overt policy may be formalised, explicit and manifest whereas a covert policy may be informal, implicit and latent, which can explain how although when a government may have stated in its education plan that a particular minority language needs to be respected and appreciated, if the planning strategies which would facilitate this are not put into place, such an education plan is not going to be successful in the social context where it is intended to work.¹⁹⁵ In fact, language policy aims at times seem to be just hopes and well-intentioned wishes that end up not leading to successful interventions.¹⁹⁶ The previous case in point shows how language policy, as with the majority of policies pursued by a government or a state, does not exist in some kind of

¹⁹² Grin, p. 28.

¹⁹³ Ronald Schmidt Sr, 'Political Theory and Language Policy' in *An Introduction to Language Policy: Theory and Method*, ed. by Thomas Ricento (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), pp. 95-110 (p. 97).

¹⁹⁴ Mari Jones and Ishtla Singh, *Exploring Language Change* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), p. 106.

¹⁹⁵ Schiffman, p. 13.

¹⁹⁶ Baker, p. 221.

vacuum but is dependent on other variables.¹⁹⁷ Mar-Molinero points out that “Language policy is part of overall governmental policy and must be understood as being closely inter-related with other social and political objectives and decision-making” and this often relates to governments constructing language policy for their own benefit.¹⁹⁸ In fact Blommaert goes on to emphasise that language policy is customarily based on forms of language use desired by society and he confirms that for the reason that policies are so closely linked to a government’s ideal linguistic landscape of society, practices may be sustained that effectively prohibit linguistic diversity in the public domain.¹⁹⁹

Language planning denotes special significance when understanding the intricate relationships between language and society, as it has to do with society’s deliberate intervention in the course of a language’s development.²⁰⁰ As part of a social framework, it has an interdisciplinary character and it is shaped by contributions from other disciplines like, economics, sociology, ethnography, politics or psychology which play a role towards acquiring a wider knowledge of the planning process.²⁰¹ In fact, according to Ricento, all these disciplines are needed to better understand language planning, since it is mostly due to the complexity of the issues which involve language in society that there is no overarching theory of language policy and planning, and empirical data from all these

¹⁹⁷ Robert Blackwood, *The State, the Activists and the Islanders: Language Policy in Corsica* (Springer, 2008), p. 2.

¹⁹⁸ Mar-Molinero, *The Politics of Language*, p. 75.

¹⁹⁹ Jan Blommaert, ‘Language Policy and National Identity’ in *An Introduction to Language Policy: Theory and Method*, ed. by Thomas Ricento (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), pp. 238-254 (p. 244).

²⁰⁰ Florian Coulmas, ‘Introduction’ in *The Handbook of Sociolinguistics*, ed. by Florian Coulmas (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), p. 10.

²⁰¹ Carla Amorós Negre, ‘Diferentes Perspectivas en torno a la Planificación Lingüística’ in *Actas del XXXVII Simposio Internacional de la Sociedad Española de Lingüística* ed. by Inés Olza Moreno and others (Pamplona: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Navarra, 2008), pp. 17-29 (p. 7).

sources needs to be examined in order to be able to guide public policy choices and desired outcomes.²⁰²

Change in attitudes and linguistic performance is what language planning involves as it is concerned with the linguistic and social aspects of language.²⁰³ There are some stages according to Haugen that need to be met as part of a language planning process; first, a language variety that is to be protected or supported is selected, followed by the codification or standardisation of the norm with standardisation procedures in graphisation, grammaticalisation and lexicalisation -standardisation can also be exemplified as the putting forward of a dialect as the official norm for an entire multidialectal area as happened with Euskera in the Basque Country, subsequently, the changes are implemented in the community, making corrections as needed, and finally as a functional development, the elaboration in terms of terminology, modernisation and stylistic development occurs.²⁰⁴ In turn, these stages in language planning can be divided depending on whether they imply changes in the language itself and therefore are classified as corpus planning, which involves changes in vocabulary, orthography and structure; or whether they are socio-political in nature, like status planning, which determines the social position of a language with regards to other languages or to the political, social or ideological criteria of the governments.²⁰⁵ However, corpus planning and status planning are strongly linked and habitually cannot work separately, even in cases like the need to build a new social image for French in Quebec, which involved

²⁰² Thomas Ricento, 'Language Policy: Theory and Practice – An Introduction' in *An Introduction to Language Policy: Theory and Method*, ed. by Thomas Ricento (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), pp. 10-23 (p. 10).

²⁰³ Daoust, p. 451.

²⁰⁴ Einar Haugen, 'The Implementation of Corpus Planning: Theory and Practice' in *Progress in Language Planning*, ed. by Juan Cobarrubias and Joshua Fishman (Berlin: Mouton, 1983), p. 275.

²⁰⁵ Francisco Moreno Fernández, *Principios de sociolingüística y sociología del lenguaje* (Barcelona: Ariel, 1998), p. 333.

terminology planning through corpus planning methods.²⁰⁶ To these two categories of language planning, Cooper added a third one which is interconnected with the other two and has ended up being fundamental: acquisition planning, which relates to organised activities used to increase learning opportunities and incentives in order to promote language learning.²⁰⁷

Haugen's writings have been part of the documentation of the case of language planning in Norway and his study and theories have no doubt contributed in earnest towards the implementation processes of many modern language planning policies at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty first. However, this type of 'management' of languages has been questioned as a "rather behaviorist model of human action and may appear naive about the complexity of the symbolic, cultural values that mediate between official decisions and individual behaviors".²⁰⁸ However, this view by Woollard is rather limiting in that it does not acknowledge that language planning is not merely a 'management of society' but rather it can be a way of fulfilling the wishes of society, to reverse language shift or merely to reverse history's asymmetrical power relations, as was the case with Catalan after Franco's time, by protecting or enhancing languages by taking action through concrete policies. Besides, these policies do not work in exclusivity, but bring together data and opinions from a range of disciplinary perspectives and the people who agree with them, thus showing that different parts of society are interested in pursuing the change or the return to 'normality' and want to play a part.

²⁰⁶ Daoust, p. 448.

²⁰⁷ Cooper, p. 189.

²⁰⁸ Kathryn Woollard & Tae-Joong Gahng, 'Changing Language Policies and Attitudes in Autonomous Catalonia', *Language in Society*, 19 (1990), 311-330 (p. 311).

Moreover, this return to ‘normality’ is what normalisation planning aims to do, that is, to recognize and meet the communicative needs of its community as well as increasing the use of the minority language by way of expanding its use into as many domains as possible and into as big a geographic area as possible.²⁰⁹ This normalisation planning in turn is heavily linked to any language planning process, in the same way as the boundary between corpus planning and status planning may be blurred, since normalisation cannot happen without standardisation.²¹⁰

Although the aim of language planning is to affect the use of language, the specific aims of language planners will differ from context to context. Language planners in a community with an obsolescent variety will centre on revitalisation which aims to increase the amount of people who speak that language or variety at issue.²¹¹

In cases of obsolescence the question as to why should there be a concern with the maintenance of an ailing language is often raised. Some authors like Lodaes go even further than that and question the very possibility of languages being able to be endangered or to die, let alone being revitalised.²¹² However, it is worth pointing out that instigating the protection and promotion of a language should be rationalised by the notion that there exists a right, which ought to be recognised as a basic human right, to interact in one’s own language.²¹³

Romaine confirms that in fact there is a danger of language policies often only being available when the languages are virtually extinct. In that case, taking into account the sociolinguistic conditions of the community would be paramount in order to achieve an

²⁰⁹ Blackwood, p. 4.

²¹⁰ Mar-Molinero, *The Politics of Language*, p. 80.

²¹¹ Jones and Singh, pp. 106-109.

²¹² Lodaes, p. 53.

²¹³ Grin, pp. 24-25.

effective language policy. Otherwise, if there is lack of equivalence between these conditions and what the policy maintains, the latter will not succeed, leading to an absence of realistic planning.²¹⁴ Additionally, if an endangered language is to survive there will be a need for operational language policies which will have an effect at the macrolevel, like literacy, and which will take into account the microvariables specific to each community, thus influencing every part of the community's life.²¹⁵

Minority languages, when trying to obtain recognition and hence be entitled to institutional protection, often find that they would benefit from intervention by the state.²¹⁶ However, the language policies to be implemented have to be based on consultation and linguistic research instead of being based on government decree; otherwise they are likely to face some difficulties. These complications, as Bamgbose has identified can be: 'avoidance, vagueness, arbitrariness, fluctuation, and declaration without implementation'.²¹⁷

Language reforms are dependent on social attitudes towards language, nationalistic feelings, as well as the linguistic norms of the community and sociolinguistic responses to change.²¹⁸ However, what allegedly seems to be the 'same' policy, possibly will lead to diverse outcomes, depending on the situation in which it functions. Reforms only have value to the extent that society wishes to take action to protect the languages by means of

²¹⁴ Romaine, pp. 194-212.

²¹⁵ Lenore Grenoble and Lindsay Whaley, *Endangered Languages: Current Issues and Future Prospects* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 27-35.

²¹⁶ Derhemi, pp. 248-269.

²¹⁷ Ayo Bamgbose, *Language and the Nation: The Language Question in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991), p. 111.

²¹⁸ Daoust, p. 451.

concrete policies.²¹⁹ Although legislation by itself will not protect a language; it is the approach of the speakers towards the change that will have the most powerful effect.

²¹⁹ Ricento, pp. 10-11.

CHAPTER 2 Aragonese in context

2.1 History of Aragon

The vast northern mountain ranges of the Cantabrian mountains and either side of the Pyrenees used to be inhabited principally by Basques, Cantabrians and Asturians, who farmed the land. Circa 218 B.C., the Romans began to conquer the Ebro valley.¹ By the third century A.D., when the Roman Empire was beginning to fracture, most of the inhabitants of the lands on either side of the Ebro River had adopted the customs, language and culture of the Romans.

In the fifth century, the Visigoths entered Spain from southern France and occupied the Ebro valley and the valleys of its tributaries until the mid-seventh century.

At the beginning of the eighth century, the Iberian Peninsula was invaded by the Muslims. Later, in the eleventh century, invasion of the southern area by the Almoravids led great numbers of Mozarabs and Jews to move to the northern areas of the 'Marca Superior'. This had significant repercussions with regard to the repopulation of these lands. From this point onwards, the Carolingian influence was replaced by Mozarab cultural currents, owing to the peaceful relations established with Muslim families in the neighbouring areas.²

¹José Luis Corral, *Historia Contada de Aragón* (Zaragoza: Librería General, 2000), p. 11.

²Coloma Lleal, *La formación de las lenguas romances peninsulares* (Barcelona: Barcanova, 1990), p. 35.

Upon Sancho the Elder's death in 1035, García inherited Pamplona and royal authority over Pamplona, Aragon and Castile. The kingdom of Aragon was inherited by his brother, Ramiro I. Thus, borders were established for the first time between Aragon and Pamplona.

Towards the end of the twelfth century, after much expansion across the Ebro valley, King Ramiro II offered his daughter, together with the kingdom of Aragon, to the Templar, Count Ramón Berenguer IV of Barcelona. The offer was accepted immediately.

During the government of Ramón Berenguer IV, an Aragonese identity was developed. The Aragonese lands extended to Bajo Aragón, placing the limits of the kingdom on the Mediterranean coast. The river Ebro was established as the border between Aragon and the Catalan counties, where it remained until the end of the thirteenth century.

After the unification of the peninsula by the Catholic Monarchs, the Crown of Aragon gradually disappeared. In 1494, Ferdinand the Catholic created the Council of Aragon to deal with matters regarding all of the States of the Crown of Aragon; however, in 1555, the matter of the Italian territories was separated off and handed over to a specific Council of Italy. From the time of Charles I onwards, the lands which made up the Crown of Aragon ceased to act as one and became integrated into the unity of the Crown of Spain. The permanence in the Court of the Council of Aragon, which participated in matters regarding Aragon, Catalonia, Valencia, Majorca and Cerdeña, was the only reminder of the former political situation. This council was abolished by the Bourbons in 1716.³

³ Ibid.

Following the death of Charles II, Aragon was transformed into a mere administrative territorial circumscription of the Crown of Spain. In 1707, Aragon's jurisdiction was abolished and the entire Aragonese politico-administrative system disappeared, thus abolishing its independence and autonomy. Despite the loss of its political form, the kingdom retained its Aragonese identity. There was an economic preoccupation with raising the standard of living of the Aragonese population that manifested itself in the writings and acts of the exponents of the Aragonese Enlightenment.⁴ The economic boom of the eighteenth century came to an end with the Napoleonic Wars, and its political and military avatars meant that the different regions were self-governed, which favoured autonomy.

In the early nineteenth century, however, after a change to the old regime, Spain underwent administrative restructuring, first in 1822 and then in 1833. Spain was divided into its current provinces and Aragon was dissolved into the Aragonese provincial tripartite which still exists today. There remained an attachment to the liberties of the old provincial legal system and, in 1872, Charles wrote a manifesto which promised to bring back the old law courts in all of the former States of the Crown of Aragon.⁵

It was at the time of the Republic that the first signs of regionalism appeared. These were intensified by the decision to substitute the bars of Aragon and the chains of Navarra on the national coat of arms for the arms of Amadeo de Saboya, which provoked a powerful

⁴ Carlos Royo Villanova, *El regionalismo aragonés* (Zaragoza: Guara Editorial, 1978), p. 26.

⁵ Vicente, J. Armillas in Saiz Navarro, José Manuel. *Gran Enciclopedia Aragonesa. Tomo I*, ed. by Antonio Ubieto Arteta (Zaragoza: Unali, 1980), p. 95.

reaction from young intellectuals throughout the Crown of Aragon. This was the beginning of a movement to regain autonomy.⁶

In the last third of the nineteenth century, the country's economic was expanding. Agricultural innovation, new methods of communication and advances in railways gave rise to a new industrial and financial middle class.⁷ Perhaps fuelled by the practice of having local political leaders, regionalism presented itself as a political equivalent to the economic power and modernisation process which the regional middle classes were realising in their various fields.

⁶ Eloy Fernández Clemente and Carlos Forcadell, *Estudios de Historia Contemporánea de Aragón*. (Zaragoza: Facultad de Ciencias Empresariales de Zaragoza, 1978), p. 16.

⁷ Royo Villanova, p. 56.

2.2 Contemporary developments

2.2.1 Political Aragonism in the Twentieth Century

In the early twentieth century, several magazines and weekly publications appeared that brought political regionalism to the fore. They defended moderate reformatory politics and gathered together the desires of the new middle class, which sought to create a regional identity as their best hope of protecting their economic interests.⁸ This process was seen across different regions of Spain. Catalan nationalism received a great boost with the creation in 1901 of the Lliga Regionalista, by Enric Prat de la Riba which dominated Catalan political life until the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera. Enric Prat de la Riba also created in 1907 the Institut d'Estudis Catalans which underlined the importance of the Catalan language for strengthening Catalan identity and power. Similarly, the creation of the Academia Vasca took place in the *Congres Basque* of 1906. Soon afterwards, 1907 saw the launch of the *Revista Internacional de Estudios Vascos*, which was an exemplar of its generation.⁹ Between 1912 and 1913, regionalism was perceived as a great problem for the country and the association of regionalism with Catalanism became an apparent burden, heightened by Catalonia's significant industrialisation and economic development in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.¹⁰ The Royal Decree of the Commonwealth of Deputations of 1913 served to intensify the regionalist effort. This law was viewed as an instrument that might allow the establishment of juridical entities which would represent

⁸ Ibid., p. 139.

⁹ María Teresa Echenique Elizondo and Juan Sánchez Méndez, *Las Lenguas de un Reino: Historia Lingüística Hispánica* (Madrid: Gredos, 2005), p. 84.

¹⁰ Fernández Clemente and Forcadell, p. 19.

the unity of the provinces of the former kingdoms that had been converted into Spanish regions. In Aragon, not all of the political powers welcomed the possibilities offered by this law so warmly. The federals criticised the Commonwealth law saying that, in Aragon, the motives for regionalism did not have a historical basis and that the public consciousness was not yet aware of them and therefore the Aragonese federals could not participate in that spectacle. The proposal of an “Ebro Commonwealth” was mentioned, which might emphasize the geographical and economic, rather than historical, aspects of the regionalist concept.¹¹

By contrast, other Aragonese citizens believed that Aragon should realize one of Costa’s dreams by setting itself up as a Commonwealth. Thus it might manage its own economy, ahead of economic interests, and even agricultural “unions”. This first Commonwealth was never formed, but the Aragonese living in Barcelona sought protection from the Royal Decree, hoping to develop some “Charter Regulations of the Aragonese Commonwealth”.¹²

The significant Aragonist activity of the century’s second decade marks a high point in enthusiasm and the feverish creation of institutions and groups that has been difficult to reach since. The development of popular culture was given a great boost by the Costumbrista literature of the time. Also, the Aragonist magazine, *The Ebro*, was used to voice the concerns of the Aragonist Union of Barcelona, although it also included

¹¹ Fernández Clemente and Forcadell, p. 19.

¹² José Carlos Mainer, ‘Doce años de Aragón’, *Andalán*, 1-15 October (1974), p. 6.

independent articles on political Aragonism. In 1919, two regionalist deputies, Barbastro and Boltaña, appeared for the first time as candidates in the general elections.¹³

The proclamation of the republic on 14th April 1931 heralded a new era for Aragonese political regionalism, and led to groups pushing for federalism, as happened across Spain. The creation of the Generalitat de Catalunya in 1931 and the passing of the Estatuto de Autonomia converted Catalan into a language co-official with Castilian.¹⁴ This step opened the way for the increasing use of Catalan in newspapers and radio, as well as its use in schools and universities, which further permitted its development, normativisation and acceptance by all levels of society. The Zaragozan Administrative Commission, however, decided to wait until the Republic's Constitution was passed before making a pronouncement. In the December Constitution, a compromise was made between a unitary and a federal State and it was established on the very first page that “La República, constituye un Estado integral, compatible con la autonomía de los municipios y regiones”, and the first section was dedicated to the organisation of the region as an autonomous political entity, governed by its own Charters.¹⁵

In the congressional meetings which took place at the beginning of May in Caspe, the foundations of the future Autonomic Charter of Aragon were approved. A month later, the legislative commission approved a Draft of Charters, which was published in *The Aragon Journal* on 8th July. Meanwhile, however, a group of three professors, a notary and a lawyer, known as "the five dignitaries" were elaborating a parallel Charters Bill, which

¹³ Fernández Clemente and Forcadell, p. 21.

¹⁴ Echenique Elizondo and Sánchez Méndez, p. 257.

¹⁵ Sáinz de Varanda cited in Royo Villanova, p. 81.

was published in *The Informer* around the same time and which demonstrated the historicism and right-wing, technocratic regionalism of its authors. Both publications exchanged reproaches, while the *Aragon Herald* stated: “A Aragón no le interesa el Estatuto ni la autonomía política”.¹⁶ In many State projects over the century, there was an insistence on what was unique to the region. The history, geography, psychology and economic structure of Aragon were to be restored to the region.¹⁷

The Civil War put an end to the processing of the Draft bill of the Caspe Charters, which probably would have secured Aragon's political autonomy within the Republic a couple of years later and there was a return of the tripartite provincial division, which remained in force in "national" Spain.¹⁸

The thirty years following the end of the Civil War are the blackest in the history of Aragonese regionalism. The unity, understood as uniformity, of the people and lands of Spain was one of the great political obsessions of the Regime. Only the activities of the Aragonese Academy of Social Sciences and the efforts to create a Compilation of the Civil Law of Aragon survived, together with the vain calls for Aragon to be reunified made by a few exiles in the years following the end of the Civil War.¹⁹

The manifestations of indigenous Aragonese culture were also distortedly standardised with the clichés of the noble *baturro* stubbornness, expressed through the operatic *jota*

¹⁶ Royo Villanova, p. 91.

¹⁷ Fernández Clemente and Forcadell, p. 38.

¹⁸ Royo Villanova, p. 98.

¹⁹ Antonio Peiró Arroyo and Bizen Pinilla, *Nacionalismo y Regionalismo en Aragón (1868-1942)* (Zaragoza: Unali, 1981), p. 171.

folksongs with a touch of coarse humour. The authentic traditional lyrics of the *jotas* and folksongs were substituted by other pseudo religious, patriotic, officious, adulatory and degrading ones. The state of affairs in Spain at the time implied that something could only become a serious object of study if it were linked to a common process of state integration, but it was reduced to a level of local erudition, and the studies of regional life were generalised reflections or affirmations of peculiarities.²⁰

Social change and the coming of age of a new generation born around the time of the Civil War, brought about the revival at the end of the 1960s of the Aragonese people's regional consciousness and the first sprouting of political regionalism, which at this point was still incipient and illegal.²¹

In 1953, the entity "Friends of the *Jota*" had been created, which was transformed in 1971 into a cultural association named "The *Cachirulo*-Friends of the *Jota*", after the traditional Aragonese dress and song, respectively. The association's main aim was: "La promoción, exaltación y defensa de los valores humanos, culturales y espirituales de la región aragonesa; sus tierras, sus hombres y manifestaciones."²²In reality, its activities were limited to gastronomic and folkloric aims.

Aside from the official world of culture and the centres of political and middle-class power, other worries were beginning to rack the Aragonese population towards the end of the sixties. At this time, most of the Aragonese population experienced an increase in

²⁰ José Carlos Mainer, *Regionalismo, burguesía y cultura* (Barcelona: Redondo Editores, 1974), p. 157.

²¹ Royo Villanova, p. 97.

²² Ibid., p. 98.

material standard of living but Aragon's participation in the overall productivity of Spain decreased. Emigration from rural areas to Zaragoza grew. In 1970, the rural areas appeared to be in a perilous situation and 85% of the Aragonese municipalities were qualified as virtually economically dead.²³ The Aragonese people started to become aware of this situation and this catalysed true political regionalism.

Together with the elaboration of the traditional song by several Aragonese writers, the Aragonese language, *fabla*, made a strong political come-back and was rendered into poetry by Francho Nagore, who in that year published the book *Sospiros de l'aire*. The Aragonese-language literary tradition, which had never been completely lost, had begun to intensify and it was perhaps Beremundo Méndez Coarasa who had worked the hardest to achieve this through publications in various magazines and newspapers in Jaca between 1930 and 1960. The importance of literature can be seen with the great vitality of Catalan amongst its almost seven million speakers which can partly be ascribed to its rich literary history and subsequent normativisation processes. In the 15th Century, literature in Catalan experienced a golden age with widely read authors such as Joanot Martorell, Martí Joan de Galba and Jaume Roig.²⁴ In the last part of the 19th Century there was another surge in Catalan literature which further accelerated the process of normativisation of the language. Similarly, during the 19th Century, a thriving Galician literature also developed in the 'Rexurdimento' of the Galician language. In 1863 Rosalia de Castro published her *Cantares Gallegos*, which was the first work of literature written entirely in Galician after many centuries. Manuel Curros Enríquez in the 1870s and Eduardo Pondal in 1880s were

²³ Royo Villanova, p. 101.

²⁴ Echenique Elizondo and Sánchez Méndez, pp. 246-247.

two other key writers who helped the transition of Galician from an oral to a literary language.²⁵ In Galicia, the Real Academia Gallega was founded in 1905 and oversaw the completion of a Galician grammar and dictionary.²⁶ By comparison, Aragonese lacked such an established literary corpus around which to rally and provide a reference point for normativisation.

In the early Seventies it soon became clear that the only way to institutionalise the region would be to oppose the regime politically and in 1974, amongst other issues, the Aragonese protested against the redirection of the Ebro towards Catalonia. Regional consciousness intensified, with an increase in the publication of articles written in Aragonese and Catalan in Eastern Aragon,²⁷ and there were also Aragonese song recitals for the first time in Madrid, Barcelona and villages in Aragon.²⁸

After the success of two Aragonese Week gatherings in Zaragoza, Aragonese Weeks began to be organised all over Aragon. Aragon requested the total regionalisation of the country with vast regional responsibilities. It was asserted by Juan Ruiz, in *Andalán*, a fortnightly publication declaring itself an attempt to help Aragon rediscover its authentic identity, that the province had become “pequeña como área de prestación de servicios, inadecuada para su organización unitaria, insuficiente para atender a la pluralidad

²⁵ Echenique Elizondo and Sánchez Méndez, p. 461.

²⁶ Echenique Elizondo and Sánchez Méndez, p. 464.

²⁷ A section in Aragonese, entitled “in our *fabla*”, was already being written in the fortnightly *Andalán* from its sixteenth edition (1st May 1973) onwards. In this first article, Francho Nagore said that the reason for beginning such a feat was to find “un rincón dende ó s'esparzese a cultura aragonesa, a cultura que se fa en os meyo d'esprisión de l'idioma aragonés”.

²⁸ Royo Villanova, p. 111.

urbanística, económica y lingüística de España”.²⁹ However, the pathway that had been opened up by the plan for the Basic Law led to the General Community of Aragon attempting to create those administrative instruments which, via a Commonwealth, might allow the unified management of Aragon by the Deputations themselves.³⁰

In 1976, the "Consello d'a Fabla Aragonesa" was created, with the objective of coordinating all of the works and activities aimed at revitalising the situation of the Aragonese language. It focused on the need for Aragonese citizens to show a united front, to obtain official and scientific recognition of their language and to ask the official Aragonese bodies to defend the Aragonese language. In February of that year, the Government announced a new administrative regime specifically for Catalonia and that there was a possibility that special regimes might also be made available to other Spanish territories. Having learnt of these plans, *Andalán* published an article entitled *Regional Power* on 1st March, which said:

“Regionalismo es poder regional. El poder regional lo deben configurar los ciudadanos mediante un proceso de participación democrática en su región. Regionalizar no es una gracia ministerial. Es el derecho de un pueblo que desea expresarse libremente. Por ahí hay que empezar. Por no entorpecer a las fuerzas políticas que hoy elaboran sus opciones regionales”.³¹

²⁹ Juan Ruiz, ‘Editorial’, *Andalán*, 1-15 October 1974.

³⁰ *Andalán*, 1-15 October 1974.

³¹ *Andalán*, 1-15 March 1976.

Meanwhile, the words of that *Grausino* Aragonese exile to Barcelona, Samblancat, were as relevant as ever: “A Madrid lo único que le pedimos es que no nos moleste.”³²

The most important action of this regionalist current was the Regionalist Declaration that the General Community of Aragon made in Sos del Rey Católico at the End of November 1976, which expressed the characteristics of reformist administrative regionalism and affirmed that regionalism was not attempting to undermine regional uniformity; each region's interests should be protected, including their vernacular language and customs.

The electoral campaign opened on 24th May 1977, culminating in the elections of 15th June. The Federation of Socialist Parties (FPS), which included eleven parties, proposed that unified, democratic electoral associations be formed in each region in defence of the autonomies. However, the pacts made by the socialists from Madrid and Catalonia with the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) harshly affected the electoral proposals of the FPS, causing it to split.³³

The election result for the Congress of Deputies clearly showed that the Union of the Democratic Centre (UCD) and the PSOE had triumphed in Aragon. In the Senate elections the right won seven seats and the left five.

After the election results, the preoccupation with autonomy came to the political fore. Almost all of the political candidates had their own plan for Aragon, according particular

³² Angel Samblancat, *Andalán*, 15- 30 April (1975).

³³ COLECTIVO, *Sobre Aragón, Movimiento Cultural de Aragón* (Zaragoza, 1976).

importance to the matter of autonomic recognition, although only a few made this their main concern. The left said that:

“la personalidad diferenciada de las distintas colectividades que integran España, tendrá su reconocimiento debido en la futura Constitución y en lo que nos concierne, prometemos un esfuerzo sin descanso hasta lograr el establecimiento de un poder regional aragonés que, en el marco de un Estatuto aprobado democráticamente por los aragoneses, esté en condiciones de afrontar eficazmente los graves problemas sociales, culturales o económicos que nos afectan.”³⁴

This was followed by a skeleton structure for a future Charter of Autonomy for Aragon.³⁵

The diverse regional proposals put forward by the political forces appeared from July onwards in the Aragonese Parliamentary Assembly's internal debates about the content of various drafts of texts for regimes of provisional autonomy, and then pre-autonomy.³⁶

On 10th July 1977, the members of the Parliamentary Assembly held a meeting and made two fundamental agreements: to institutionalise the Assembly as a permanent political organ to serve Aragonese interests, and to draw up a Charter of Autonomy.³⁷ That day, they debated the possibility of supporting the principle of simultaneity in the recognition of the regional autonomies.

³⁴ This is an extract from a letter published by the Aragonese Candidacy for Democratic Union (CAUD) on 23rd June in order to express its gratitude to the Zaragoza community.

³⁵ ‘Líneas maestras para el futuro Estatuto de Autonomía de Aragón’ First edition of *Cuadernos de Aragón Socialista*, (May 1977).

³⁶ For the “Anteproyecto de Estatutos de Autonomía de Aragón”, which was drawn up on the initiative of the Zaragoza Colegio de Abogados, by an inter-party commission of 32 people and which was completed in May 1977, see no. 25 in *Aragón 2000* (19th October 1977).

³⁷ Royo Villanova, p. 251.

The Assembly met again on 10th October and, as a consequence, a system of provisional autonomy was officially requested for Aragon, similar to that which had recently been approved for Catalonia, and the Permanent Commission authorised the redaction of two drafts of Decree-Law Projects of Provisional Autonomy for Aragon, which were drawn up and approved in the Parliamentary Assembly on 30th October.³⁸ It was another few months before the Pre-autonomic Royal Decree-Law for Aragon was passed.

2.2.2 Political identity in Aragon

Aragon had disappeared as a political and juridical entity with the Nueva Planta Decrees dictated by Philip V in 1707. On 11th March 1978, after several complaints from political parties about the delay in processing the law, the cabinet approved the Aragonese pre-autonomic system.³⁹

Aragon was thus equipped with a governing body, the General Deputation of Aragon, which immediately declared 23rd April 'Aragon Day'⁴⁰ and established the historic horizontal bars as the official flag of Aragon.⁴¹ To progress to full political autonomy, Aragon had to wait for the new Constitution to come into force.⁴²

³⁸ The "Anteproyecto de Real Decreto-Ley de Autonomía Provisional para Aragón" passed in Albarracín by the Parliamentary Assembly of Aragon on 30th October 1977, *Heraldo de Aragón*, 1st November 1977.

³⁹ The "Royal Decree-Law 8/1978 of 17th March whereby the pre-autonomic system was authorized for Aragon" was published in the "Boletín Oficial del Estado" of 18th March; the "Royal Decree 475/1978, of 17th March, whereby the previous Royal Decree-Law was developed" published in the same edition of the *B.O.E.*

⁴⁰ For more information on this topic and to see the responses to a survey on the most appropriate symbol for the Aragonese flag, that it was put to its readers, see *Andalán*, April 1978.

⁴¹ *Andalán*, April 1978.

⁴² Royo Villanova, p. 38.

However, by the time the Constitution was passed in December 1978, the Aragonist landscape had been reduced to a single, rather conservative organisation, the Aragonese Regionalist Party (PAR). In early 1978, leaders of the UCD in Aragon had transferred to the PAR, giving it a more professional structure and introducing what came to be known as *strategic Aragonism*. Meanwhile, according to the theory of the two Aragonisms,⁴³ *cultural Aragonism* (which was linked to the left) had lesser value in the electoral market.

The autonomic process became one of the main objects of political propaganda used by the largest parties (the UCD and PSOE). However, after the general elections of 1979, the PSOE and UCD subordinated the autonomic process to the preservation of stability in the State. In April 1980, when the PSOE joined the UCD's January initiative, this became known as the "rationalisation of the autonomic process". However, it seems clear that the autonomous matter confused the parties and, between December 1980 and July 1982, when the Aragonese Charter of Autonomy was being drawn up, they did not maintain the same critical position they had previously held.

In 1982, the Aragonese Socialist Party (PSA) began to be swallowed up by the PSOE. To the right, the Aragonese Regionalist Party ran in coalition with Popular Alliance, without attempting to hide its authoritarian ideas. Mairal⁴⁴ believes that, during the transition, the PSA was the key force when it came to pushing for Aragonese autonomy, but that when this party disappeared there was no political successor.

⁴³ Julio López Laborda, Vicente Pinilla Navarro, and Luis Antonio Sáez Pérez, 'Un análisis económico del nacionalismo aragonés: primeras preguntas', in *Seminario de Investigación para la Paz: Los nacionalismos*. (Zaragoza: Diputación General de Aragón, 1994), p. 329.

⁴⁴ Gaspar Mairal Buil, *La identidad de los aragoneses* (Zaragoza: Erido Editorial, 1996), p. 69.

Following the referendum on NATO, the pace suddenly quickened and groups which had demonstrated in favour of 'NO' came together to form the New Aragonese Left,⁴⁵ which put forward its arguments in the "Reunión de Aragonesistas" in May 1986. A constitutive assembly gathered in June and formed the *Unión Aragonesista-Chunta Aragonesista*, later known simply as the *Chunta Aragonesista*.⁴⁶ Its proposals included: nationalism based on the region's history and on the desire to exist as a community, socialism, federalism, an alternative autonomous left wing and an observance of the Constitution.⁴⁷

In the summer of 1987, the leadership passed into the hands of the PAR. Towards the end of the 1980s, the PAR began to turn strategically to a nationalist identity, rather than a regionalist one. The PAR based its nationalism on the affirmation of Aragon as a nation on account of its history, placing it on a level with Catalonia and Euskadi.⁴⁸

The resurgence of Aragonese political power can be seen clearly in the success of the CHA, which gained representation in six town councils in the municipal and autonomic

⁴⁵ *Rolde*, 35 (1986), "YES to NATO, or the irrefutable charm of not being in favour of work", the editors said of the referendum that it had the virtue of "exciting and regrouping the left, known in Aragon as depressive, and seeing it once again working alongside people that it had lost when it turned the corner of the '60s".

⁴⁶ For further information on the origins of the CHA, see the book published to commemorate the 15th anniversary of its foundation: *15 años construyendo el futuro. Aproximación a la historia de Chunta Aragonesista 1986-2001* (Zaragoza, 2001).

⁴⁷ Eduardo Vicente de Vera, 'La apuesta por un nacionalismo solidario', *Rolde* 39, 1987, p.16.

⁴⁸ The PAR's first claim of nationality had been put forward by Gómez de las Rocas, in the discussions about the Charter of Autonomy in 1981 and 1982, in which he had specifically opposed the introduction of the term 'nation' into the Spanish Constitution itself; but because of this, when they started in the eighties to envisage the future autonomic map, the PAR began its strategic shift towards nationalism.

elections of 1991. In 1992 and 1993 demonstrations⁴⁹ were held in support of full autonomy and in opposition to the National Hydraulic Plan; these showed that certain slogans and identity symbols were powerful tools in mobilising the population.⁵⁰

The push for autonomy intensified and towards the end of 1996, the General Parliament passed a Charter reform which partially covered demands for reform. It placed emphasis on the Aragonese community, Aragon's history, official linguistic co-existence, commitment to the defence of culture, reinforcement of the Supreme Magistrate, education and an organised Treasury.⁵¹

After the elections of June 1999, Chunta attained a group in the Aragonese Parliament and in the 2000 general elections, José Antonio Labordeta was elected to the Congress of Deputies as a representative of the CHA. The CHA continued to fight for its distinct individual voice to be heard in Madrid. It thus achieved the reorganisation of the Aragonese territory and powers were transferred from the provincial deputations to the regional districts.

In 2000 and 2001 there was a noticeable resurgence of regional spirit, with demonstrations in Zaragoza to protect the Ebro, a strike in Teruel demanding that the political agendas of the interior territories be readdressed, and in the Pyrenees a strike against large reservoirs. A steady revival of Aragonese identity symbols began, including increasingly firm steps

⁴⁹ The magnitude of the Aragonese reaction had not even been anticipated by the parties that had organized these public demonstrations.

⁵⁰ Carlos Serrano Lacarra, 'Aragonesismo entre 1972 y 1982: cultura y práctica política' in *Historia del Aragonismo* (Zaragoza: Edicions de l'Astral Rolde de Estudios Aragoneses, 1999), p. 45.

⁵¹ José Santaliestra, *Rolde de Estudios Aragoneses: Una propuesta para la reforma del Estatuto de Autonomía* (Zaragoza: Edicions de l'Astral, 1992), p. 56.

towards official recognition of the existence of three languages in Aragon. The linguistic standardisation supported by parties such as CHA was only the most visible part of this process.⁵²

In autonomous elections in Aragon, national Aragonese candidates have become increasingly popular. The electoral boom for parties such as CHA clearly indicates a surge in the collective consciousness, placing Aragon in a notable position within the aggregate of Spanish autonomous communities. It is still a long way off achieving representation comparable to that of the Basque Country or Catalonia, but it is in a group attaining between 20 and 40 percent, which includes Navarra, the Canaries and Cantabria. Notable communities such as Galicia and the Balearics are below this. However, this electoral importance is accompanied neither by political representation at a national level nor by similar theoretical development, and there is a widespread sense of inferiority to Galician nationalism.⁵³ So how can this Aragonese mobilisation over the past few years be explained? Mairal asserts that many Aragonese feel a risk is posed by its powerful neighbours having reached a higher level of autonomic development than Aragon.⁵⁴ So it might seem that the true explanation lies in a fear of exclusion rather than a sense of inferiority.

⁵² Bizen Fuster Santaliestra (National President of the CHA), "15 años construyendo el futuro" <<http://www.chunta.com/pag8.html>> [accessed 9 October 2002].

⁵³ Antonio Peiró Arroyo, 'El Aragonismo en la transición y la democracia' <<http://es.geocities.com/poenllu/aragontransicion.htm>> [accessed 25 February 2003].

⁵⁴ Mairal Buil, p. 22.

2.2.3 Linguistic Evolution

In the area which is now Navarra and Aragon, a Romance linguistic mode developed from Latin, which has a series of features distinguishing it from Castilian and Catalan.⁵⁵ This mode is generally termed the Navarro-Aragonese dialect. At the end of the eleventh century, the flatlands (Huesca and Barbastro) began to be occupied by a large number of Franks, whose presence intensified the cultural influence in the Navarro-Aragonese area. An early Romance was gradually spreading as the Reconquest progressed due to the support of military contingents from the Langue d'Oc region. According to Manuel Alvar, as many as sixty-six percent of the French who came to Aragon spoke Langue d'Oc.⁵⁶ This introduction of Gallicisms seems to have continued throughout the Middle Ages.

In what is now Aragon, Romance-proper remained alive in the primitive counties of Aragon, Sobrarbe and Ribagorza and in the Somontano. However, in the repopulated areas of the Ebro valley and in south-eastern Aragon, the population was extremely heterogeneous. Romance absorbed Mudejar and Jewish features that became diluted in a strongly Castilianised language.⁵⁷

Once Petronila and Berenguer were married, Catalan became the language of the Court. By 1137, Aragonese appeared to have had its day.⁵⁸ Yet, despite these adverse circumstances, the strategic position of the kingdom between Catalonia and Castile

⁵⁵Holtus, G. 1992. 'Die einzelnen romanischen Sprachen und Sprachgebiete von der Renaissance bis zur Gegenwart: Aragonesisch/Navarresisch: Externe und interne Sprachgeschichte' in *Lexicon der Romanistischen Linguistik Vol VI* (Tübingen: Niemeyer), p. 66.

⁵⁶ Manuel Alvar, *Estudios sobre el dialecto aragonés* (Zaragoza: TI/CSIC, 1973), p. 185.

⁵⁷ Eduardo Vicente de Vera, *El aragonés: historiografía y literatura* (Zaragoza: Mira Editores, 1992), p. 60.

⁵⁸ Vicente de Vera, *El aragonés*, p. 64.

allowed the language, especially during the fourteenth century, to be used in the Chancelleries.

From the fourteenth century onwards, the fully-formed dialect began to ebb on account of the prestige that the literature of the peninsula had acquired. Until this time, the only documented vestiges are Vidal Mayor's book, together with the Chronicle of San Juan de la Peña, the Poema de Yusuf (first half of the fourteenth century) and the historical texts of Juan Fernández de Heredia. Furthermore, Aragonese was often identified with the Zaragozan language, giving way to false evidence that they were one and the same.⁵⁹

From then until the nineteenth century, no other texts written partially or totally in Aragonese have been found, except for the three poems inserted in *Vigilia y octavario de San Juan Bautista* by Ana Abarca de Bolea in 1679, and the verses entitled *Palestra numerosa austriaca* by Matías Pradas in 1650.⁶⁰

By the early fifteenth century, the peninsular Romances were fully formed. Some, such as Castilian, already had an important literary tradition that would continue to be enriched over the following centuries. Others, such as Navarro-Aragonese, were to remain largely limited to the colloquial speech of the Aragonese area. Castilian became the only educated language in these areas, although it did take on some Aragonese lexis. At the end of the fifteenth century, Isabella married the heir of Aragon, Ferdinand, and the linguistic effects of the union were considerable. What until then might have been considered an

⁵⁹ Vicente de Vera, *El aragonés*, p. 73.

⁶⁰ Carmen Alcover and Artur Quintana, *Plans reguladors d'ensenyament de l'aragonès i el català a l'Aragó* (Zaragoza: Edicions de l'Astral, 2000), p. 132.

insignificant neglect of the language became a direct rejection by Aragonese writers, to the extent that Aragonese Romance was defined as coarse and rhetorical.

In the eighteenth century, teaching was placed into the hands of civil authorities, but the central power wanted Castilian to be the obligatory language in schools.⁶¹ However the nineteenth century became the greatest era for minority languages in Spain and in much of Europe, with the *Renaixença* in Catalonia and the *Rexurdimento* in Galicia. In Aragon, the Aragonese literati tried to find sources from Aragonese history which they portrayed as the quintessence of Spanishness, forging the prototype for what would later crudely come to represent the stereotype of Aragon: the *baturro*, or Aragonese rustic. It seems that the exponents of *baturrismo* (who were principally from the urban bourgeoisie of Zaragoza) did not realize that their works were simply examples of vulgar Castilian, interspersed with Aragonese lexis.

The nineteenth century was also the century of dictionaries. In 1836, Mariano Peralta published the *Attempt at an Aragonese-Castilian Dictionary*. Rather more relevant on account of its lexicographical contribution was Jerónimo Borau's *Dictionary of Aragonese words* (1859), in which he collected almost 3,000 words considered exclusively Aragonese. In 1901, Llatsé published the *Aragonese Dictionary: Collection of words for its formation* as part of the Zaragoza poetry competition *Juegos florales*. In 1939, Pardo-Asso wrote the last lexicographical monograph before the revitalisation movement: the *New Aragonese Etymological Dictionary*, a 5,000-word compendium of the materials

⁶¹ Alcover and Quintana, p. 13.

collected 80 years earlier by Borau, along with those of Coll, López Puyoles and Valenzuela.⁶²

In the first half of the twentieth century, there was a "Renaissance" of Aragonese literature which celebrated the writings of Veremundo Méndez, Tonón de Baldomero, Pablo Recio; Braulio Foz, Bernardo Larrosa, Bernabé Francisco Romero y Belloc, Domingo Miral and Cleto Torodellas.⁶³ Then, in 1939, Franco's victory divided Spain into the conquerors and the conquered. The policy of repressing languages was supported by all of the institutions linked to the leadership, including the Church, schools and the media. However, this policy of annihilation was directed more towards languages such as Catalan, Galician and Euskera. Aragonese was limited mainly to the Pyrenean valleys and its population was largely rural. The State's creation of an education system in Castilian had a limited effect, as not all of the population received schooling. People were constantly reminded:

“HABLE BIEN, SEA PATRIOTA. NO SEA BARBARO. Es de cumplido caballero que Usted hable nuestro idioma oficial, o sea, el castellano. Es ser patriota. Viva España y la disciplina y nuestro idioma cervantino. ¡ARRIBA ESPAÑA!”⁶⁴

As a consequence of political, and even ideological, centralism, linked to the fact that the speakers of Castilian have always been those in power, Aragonese began to be looked down upon and identified with poverty and a lack of education; as a result its speakers

⁶² María Antonia Martín Zorraquino and José María Enguita Utrilla, *Las lenguas de Aragón* CAI 100 n°90 (Zaragoza: CAI, 2000), p. 57.

⁶³ Alcover and Quintana, p. 66.

⁶⁴ Xose Ramon Freixeiro Mato, *Lingua Galega: Normalidade e conflito* (Santiago de Compostela: Edicións Laoivento, 1997), p. 90.

developed inhibitions and complexes about it.⁶⁵ The Franco period (1939-75) was a time of centralised policies that were the very epitome of the denial of linguistic rights. The regime's definition of Spain was as a strong, single, unified country which absolutely did not leave room for any linguistic minorities. Castilian was a major symbol of identity and alternative languages were repressed. However, as Mar-Molinero points out, the regime's persistent propaganda in which minority languages were rejected and even ridiculed, became so closely associated with Franco that it served as a point of reference around which to build an opposition.⁶⁶

In April 1974, about 60 young students and workers created 'L'Asociacion de chobens d'a Fabla Aragonesa'. A month later the association's first informative bulletin was published, and by November the corresponding graphical rules had been established for the language. Certain newspapers, such as *Andalán*,⁶⁷ *Aragon Express*, *La voz del Bajo Cinca*, *La voz de la Litera*, *Argensola*, *El Pirineo Aragonés*, and *Jacetania*, began to publish articles in Aragonese and the Catalan language of Eastern Aragon.⁶⁸

The differences between the various dialectical branches – as well as the different motivations of the groups trying to maintain the *fabla*, but living outside the areas in which it was spoken – caused a series of misunderstandings and arguments. These were mostly overcome at the round-table discussion held in Zaragoza⁶⁹ in an attempt to reach an

⁶⁵ Manuel González González, 'La recuperación del gallego' in *Las lenguas románicas españolas tras la constitución de 1978* (Granada: Ediciones TAT, 1988), p. 68.

⁶⁶ Clare Mar-Molinero, *The Politics of Language*, p. 85.

⁶⁷ In the seventies, *Andalán* had a permanent section initially entitled 'en a fabla nuestra', with articles in Aragonese about linguistic subjects as well as subjects of regional interest.

⁶⁸ Royo Villanova, p. 47.

⁶⁹ The round-table took place on 14th January 1974 in Pignatelli, Zaragoza.

agreement. Unfortunately, three days later Juan Antonio Frago, Professor of the Humanities Faculty in Zaragoza, gave a lecture in the Deputation which attempted to undermine and discredit the movement to conserve and consolidate the *fabla aragonesa*.⁷⁰

In 1978, the Constitution through which Spain would officially cease to be a monolingual country was passed and other languages (Catalan, Euskera and Galician) were officially recognised but not named. In particular, Article 3 is oft-quoted and commonly recognised as underpinning a new recognition of Spain's multilingualism and its linguistic rights. However, the Charter of Autonomy was not clear on which were "las demás lenguas españolas"; when this was clarified,⁷¹ the Aragonese government did not know how, or did not want, to make a firm decision about linguistic policy. Thus, it has taken more than three decades after the writing of the Spanish Constitution and a quarter of a century of Charters to have a languages law passed. And, because of its vagueness, it may not be the useful instrument that could have assured the survival of Aragonese.

⁷⁰ Royo Villanova, p. 49.

⁷¹ Ley de Patrimonio Cultural Aragonés in the Boletín Oficial de Aragón of 29th March 1999.

CHAPTER 3 The Aragonese language

3.1 Linguistic Description

Aragonese is a language that evolved from Vulgar Latin, built over a pre-existing Basque substrate, with influences through the centuries from French, later Catalan and nowadays sharing more linguistic characteristics with Spanish than with any other language. Therefore, Aragonese is not a dialect of Spanish but a language that derived from Latin and evolved alongside it.

Although the boundaries are rather blurred, the linguistically Aragonese territory is designated as those areas where some morphological and syntactic variants peculiar to Aragonese, together with its ample lexicon, are still in use, even if only used partially or among elderly people. Examples of its surviving variants are, to name but a few: plural endings in *-ns*, *-ls*, and *-rs* (*fozins* - “sucios”, *camals* - “ramas gruesas”, *diners* - “dinero”, plural), the articles *o*, *a* - “el, la”, indefinites like *cosa*- “nada” and *bel*, *bella*- “algún, alguna”, adverbial complements like *en* or *ne* - “de ello” (*no en tiengo*, *da-me ne*, *me’n boi*), the preposition *ta*- “hacia, a”, the demonstratives *ixo*, *ixa* - “eso, esa”, and some aspects of verb conjugations like imperfect endings in *-eba* and *-iba* (*meteba*, *partiba* and past simples like *metiés*- “pusiste”, *metión* - “pusieron”).¹

¹ Franchó Nagore Laín, *Os Territorios Lingüísticos en Aragón* (Zaragoza: Rolde de Estudios Aragoneses, 2001), pp. 46-48.

Although usually only local accents or different dialects are distinguished, it can be loosely considered that there are four areas in Aragon where four different dialects of Aragonese are used:



El aragonés occidental is used in the area where the Aragonese language originated. Nowadays it comprises some local varieties like Cheso in Bal d'Echo, and Ansotano in Bal d'Ansó. Spanish phonetically influences its southernmost area. Characteristics of this area are the participle endings in *-au*, *-iu*: *pasau* “pasado”, *muyiu* “ordeñado”.

El aragonés central also has its own local varieties called Tensino in Bal de Tena, and Belsetan in Bal de Bielsa among others. Its main features are: the endings of its past participles in *-ato* and *-ito* e.g. *sacato* “sacado” *querito* “querido”; the preservation of voiceless consonants between vowels in many more cases than in other areas e.g. *capeza* instead of *cabeza* and *caxigo* instead of *cachigo* “roble”; and the sonorisation of voiceless plosives after nasal and lateral sounds e.g. *cambo*, *punda*, *aldo*, instead of *campo*, *punta*, *alto*. This is the purest form of Aragonese, since it is free from Spanish and Catalan influences.

El aragonés oriental whose more particular local varieties are Chistabín in Bal de Chistau and Benasqués in Bal de Benás. This area has been the subject of many studies, due to its distinct interpretation of the use of both Catalan and Aragonese terms to form what is also known as Ribagorzano. Its most commonly used features are the use of periphrastic past simples: *bas fé* “hiciste” instead of *fazies* and *ban perdere* “perdieron” instead of *perdión*. The palatalisation of initial *-l* or when in *pl-*, *fl-* and *cl-* is common in Ribagorzano, therefore *pllorá* will be used instead of *plorar* “llorar” and *cllau* instead of *clau* “llave”. This is the variety of Aragonese most commonly used.

El aragonés meridional is used in the most homogeneous dialectal area but also in the area most heavily influenced by Spanish phonetically and morphologically. The articles *o*, *a* are generally used here, although *ro*, *ra* sometimes substitute them when used between vowels. The lexicon is very large but its use is diminishing. However, although it is generally known by most of the inhabitants of the zone, only a few use it. Despite its linguistic differences, the intelligibility among speakers of these dialectal areas remains

high, as these differences among dialectal variants are not so much structural as they are sociolinguistic.²

3.2 Sociolinguistic History and Development

A very primitive Aragonese language was formed as early as the sixth century. Romance Aragonese continued to develop until it was fully formed in the XIII century. Afterwards, it expanded literarily as well as geographically but in 1412, with the establishment of the Trastamara dynasty, Spanish started to infiltrate it and Spanish forms began to replace Aragonese ones. Until the end of the XVIII century, Aragonese survived on an almost purely oral level because the culture was transmitted in Spanish and the church used only the official language.³ Therefore common people suffered a complex of linguistic inferiority and the diglossia persisted of Spanish as the language consecrated as the only means of social promotion (i.e. the rich) and Aragonese as the language of the regressing social strata (i.e. the poor). In the early XX century began the real scientific discovery of Aragonese and many Philologist collected and published data about it (Alvar, Badía, Conte, Quintana).⁴ This century also heralded the rapid downfall of the language. From the 1940s onwards, and as a consequence of development, water planning and

² Chesús Gimeno Vallés and Francho Nagore Laín, *El Aragonés Hoy. Informe sobre la situación actual de la lengua aragonesa*. (Huesca: Consello d'a Fabla Aragonesa, 1989), pp. 15-18.

³ Vicente de Vera, *El aragonés*, p. 98.

⁴ Manuel Alvar, *El Dialecto Aragonés* (Madrid: Ed. Gredos, 1953); Antonio Badía, 'Sobre Morfología Dialectal Aragonesa', *Boletín de la Academia de Buenas Letras*. XX, (Barcelona, 1947), pp. 60-123; Anchel Conte, Chorche Cortes, Antonio Martinez, Francho Nagore, and Chesus Vázquez, *El Aragonés: Identidad y Problemática de una Lengua* (Zaragoza: Librería General, 1977); Artur Quintana, 'L'aragonés común', *XIV Congreso Internacional de Lingüística y Filología Románicas*. (Palma de Mallorca, 1980).

communications, most villages in the Pyrenees where the language was still in use became abandoned.

Whereas the problems experienced by the Aragonese language are sociolinguistic, the measures required for it to survive and develop are politico-linguistic. Aragonese is not officially recognised and consequently its study and use are not promoted. In response to the European Charter of Minority Languages, the Spanish Senate answered: “España declara que, a los efectos previstos en los citados artículos, se entienden por lenguas regionales o minoritarias, las lenguas reconocidas como oficiales en los Estatutos de Autonomía de las Comunidades Autónomas del País Vasco, Cataluña, Illes Balears, Galicia, de la Comunidad Valenciana y de la Comunidad Foral de Navarra”. Therefore Aragonese is unable to become an official language since the Aragonese Charter of Autonomy does not explicitly record Aragonese as a language, but rather as different linguistic variants of Aragonese that are to be protected as integral elements of the region's cultural heritage. This is in spite of the evidence of trilinguality in Aragon presented at the Council of Europe, where in the Congress on European minority languages, held in Strasbourg in 1984 by the European Council, the Aragonese representation headed by the then DGA's Culture Advisor, Ramón Bada, accompanied by the specialists in Catalan spoken in Aragon, Artur Quintana and Eduardo Vicente de Vera, gave a brief speech in Aragonese to all the representatives of the European nations which speak minority languages.⁵

In order to ensure a future for the language, a standardised form of Aragonese must be recognised by all, to prevent a gradual erosion of its dialects. Should this prosper, the

⁵ Vicente de Vera, *El aragonés*, p. 39.

Aragonese socio-cultural and political heritage will have a stronger basis for survival. A written corpus of the language has also been created by compiling the local dialects. Significantly, peculiarities from local dialectal forms and the large amount of current Spanish influences in the language were left out. If, however, the existence of multiple languages in Aragon is not accepted, and the dialectal variants are only recognised where they are regularly used, the language will end up being preserved in much the same way as typical regional costumes.

3.3 Current Status

According to the last linguistic census, there are close to 10,000 people who currently use Aragonese in a familial environment and for informal communication and 30,000 who could be considered passive speakers of the language;⁶ this amounts to approximately 34% of the existing population of Aragón speaking or understanding Aragonese. All speakers of this language are bilingual and see proficiency in Spanish as a social advantage. This has created diglossic bilingualism, where Spanish is the language of administration, culture and information, and the use of Aragonese is often limited to interactions among speakers belonging to the same community or family or to traditional events. This is due to its fragmentation into local varieties and the misconception that the varieties spoken in the different valleys cannot be understood by inhabitants of other valleys. Aragonese is also commonly perceived as an incomplete means of expression. It is still used nowadays in many villages in the north of the region, but the degree of conservation differs from area to area. In the western, central and eastern areas of the high Pyrenees it is used by

⁶ Juan Martínez Ferrer, *Bilingüismo y Enseñanza en Aragón* (Zaragoza: Edicions de l'Astral, 1995), p. 119.

older members of the community, and some young adults are also familiar with it. In the geographical area known as the pre-Pyrenees, Aragonese is in phase of regression. Some elders know and use it but the younger generations use “*aragonesizado* Spanish”, which includes some lexical traits and a few morphological ones. In the southern part of the area where “Aragonés meridional” is used, Aragonese is becoming increasingly redundant and only a few lexical variants remain.

The scarce information available on the use of Aragonese in the Alto Aragón area leads us, nonetheless to some clear conclusions: The use of Aragonese as a primary language has decreased considerably in the last few generations. What several centuries of centralism, underestimation, disdain towards speakers of Aragonese, and even direct persecution of the language, did not manage to achieve has been being accomplished over the past few decades, primarily by the media and schools, which almost exclusively use Castilian. It is clear that simple linguistic competence, if it is not accompanied by use, does not impede the marginalisation and gradual disappearance of a language.

There is a series of key factors which explain the progressive decrease in the use of Aragonese and its substitution by Castilian in the areas of Aragon where it is still spoken, of which the most notable are the decrease in number and importance of the rural population, in parallel with social mobility and the growth of the urban community, which has brought about the loss of Aragonese as a primary language for a considerable number of people as they climb the social ladder. Additional key factors are the increasing importance of the media, which only ever uses Castilian Spanish in Aragon, and the near

disappearance of Aragonese in schools, since it is known only to be taught sporadically and as an extra-curricular activity.

In the last few generations, the percentage of Aragonese speakers has decreased at such a rate that the disappearance of Aragonese and its replacement by Castilian seem inevitable. However, after the recent increase in the teaching of Aragonese, it could be argued that Aragonese is not in a dissimilar situation to that of Galician in 1985, when it was fighting for survival. Mauro A. Fernández wrote an article focusing on the process of maintaining the Galician language, in which he said:

“A pesar de que, en términos absolutos, el número de gallego hablantes en el ámbito familiar es actualmente menor que en las generaciones anteriores, podemos afirmar que el gallego tiene hoy unas posibilidades de continuidad mayores que las que tenía hace quince o treinta años”.⁷

It seems clear, then, that the assimilation process can be stalled by certain factors. Perhaps as part of a resurgence of ethnic sentiment, which is evident in many parts of the world, we are now witnessing a progressive increase in the public and formal use of Galician. Its greater use in private spheres, until recently, than Castilian; its assumption by the majority of political powers and unions; its presence – although still scarce – in the mass-media; its increased presence in the publishing and music worlds, etc., have begun to erode the

⁷ Mauro A. Fernández, ‘Mantenimiento y cambio de la lengua en Galicia: El ritmo de desgalleguización en los últimos cincuenta años’, *Verba*, 10 (1983), 79-129.

exclusive identification of Galician with the rural community, a lack of education and poverty.⁸

Nonetheless, the full integration of Aragonese will be far more difficult (since a considerable proportion of Aragon's population does not know its own language), than in the case of other communities in which the language has been standardised for some time and accepted by the institutions as such, as is true of Galician and, more recently, Euskera.

3.4 Language Policies and Planning

In Spain, the language policy promoted by central government opts for the territorial model - officiality in a determined territory- like the one adopted in Europe by Belgium and Switzerland.⁹ The Spanish Constitution established democratically in 1978, declared in its third article that:

- “1. Castilian is the Spanish language official in the State. All Spaniards have the obligation to know it and the right to use it.
2. The rest of the Spanish languages will also be official in their respective devolved Communities in accordance with their own Statutes.
3. The richness of the different linguistic varieties of Spain is a cultural heritage and it will be the object of special respect and protection.”¹⁰

This article therefore establishes Spanish, which is called Castilian here, as the language of Spain without doubt, and assures, by establishing the obligation of all Spanish citizens to know Spanish, its continuation in every community within the territory of the State. In

⁸ Mauro A. Fernández, p. 102.

⁹ José Ignacio López Susín, *El Régimen Jurídico del Multilingüismo en Aragón* (Zaragoza: Diputación General de Aragón, 2000), p. 106.

¹⁰ Aurora Juárez Blanquer, *Las lenguas románicas españolas tras la Constitución de 1978* (Granada: Ediciones TAT, 1988), p. 62.

its second point, it accepts the recognition of co-official languages, in those devolved Communities where other Spanish languages are used, although it does leave it to their own Statutes to formulate the exact policies and it does not imply any obligation of the knowledge of these languages. In its third point, protection and respect is granted to the different linguistic varieties of Spain and it classifies them as cultural heritage thereby implying their decay and consequently no mention is made of the promotion of their use.¹¹

Following from this, article seven of the Aragonese autonomous Government regulations was endorsed in 1982. According to this article:

“Las lenguas y modalidades lingüísticas propias de Aragón gozarán de protección. Se garantizará su enseñanza y el derecho de los hablantes en la forma que establezca una ley de Cortes de Aragón para las zonas de utilización predominante de aquéllas”.¹²

The vagueness of this article in the Statute did not help the progress of the Aragonese language. It establishes that:

“Las lenguas y modalidades lingüísticas propias de Aragón constituyen una de las manifestaciones más destacadas del patrimonio histórico y cultural aragonés y un valor social de respeto, convivencia y entendimiento”¹³

However, its most outstanding feature is the new attitude towards the languages used in Aragon, and the detail awarded to the provision of legal rights for them – probably due to the proximity of the ratification of the ‘law’:

¹¹ José del Valle, ‘Monoglossic policies for a heteroglossic culture: Misinterpreted multilingualism in modern Galicia’, *Language & Communication*, 20, (2000), pp. 105-32.

¹² *Estatuto de Autonomía de Aragón de 1982* (Zaragoza: Diputación General de Zaragoza), p. 10.

¹³ Estatuto de Autonomía de Aragón. Ley Orgánica 5/2007. Cortes de Aragón <<http://www.cortesaragon.es>> [accessed 3 February 2010].

“Una Ley de las Cortes de Aragón establecerá las zonas de uso predominante de las lenguas y modalidades propias de Aragón, regulará el régimen jurídico, los derechos de utilización de los hablantes de esos territorios, promoverá la protección, la recuperación, enseñanza, promoción y difusión del patrimonio lingüístico de Aragón, y favorecerá, en las zonas de utilización predominante, el uso de las lenguas propias en las relaciones de los ciudadanos con las Administraciones públicas aragonesas”¹⁴

The changes in this article were heralded as the saviour strength needed by the Aragonese language. However, the hopeful future based on the consideration of the current situation of the Aragonese language and the possible effects of ‘that’ law on the use of the language was bound to be a rocky path.

Traditionally, defenders of minority languages have frequently stressed that languages which are demographically weak like Aragonese, need firm pro-active policies in order to survive and flourish.¹⁵ However, for Aragonese, this path is laden with difficulty.

In the case of Aragonese the problem is twofold; firstly, despite all the possible national and European regulations to which the Aragonese language could adhere itself. The one regulation that could make a real difference, the original agreement by the Autonomous Aragonese Government approved in 1982, was worded so imprecisely that its interpretation was for years rather loose. Under this pretext, the ruling parties played with the various interpretations to suit their own needs and by failing to notice the existence of a popular linguistic culture and people’s linguistic attitudes, avoided any firm

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Romaine, pp. 240-68.

implementations. Therefore, there were through the years many failed attempts at the creation and implementation of linguistic policy for the region. Secondly, the lack of interest and means to protect the language by the Autonomous Aragonese Government was only partly to blame for the failure of the normalisation process. The ongoing claims by some scholars¹⁶ that a standard form of written Aragonese would create a poor reflection of the richness of different dialects of Aragonese and their support to revitalize each local dialect individually has continuously hindered its progress. To make matters worse, the growing interest of this group of linguists in defining language as a stable and internally coherent system is contributing to the marginalisation of actual speech, language change and linguistic variation. On the opposing end, the arguments of other scholars¹⁷ who propose a standardised version seem, however, to be gaining momentum. To them, recording a normative form of Aragonese is the only alternative to prevent the language from otherwise becoming totally marginalised and leading to its complete disappearance.

In Aragon, numerous linguistic associations have faced the incomprehension of certain linguists who have not recognised the origins, the sociological implications or the consequences of the extension of the use of Aragonese. In this sense, linguistic policies would have had a fundamental importance in clarifying a panorama that has started to be disentangled from an earlier ratification of the linguistic policy for the region.¹⁸ Since

¹⁶ Alvar, *Estudios sobre el dialecto aragonés*; Tomás Buesa Oliver, *Estudios Filológicos Aragoneses* (Zaragoza: Universidad de Zaragoza, 1989).

¹⁷ Anchel Conte and others, *El Aragonés: Identidad y Problemática de una Lengua*; Chorche Gimeno Vallés & Francho Nagore Laín, *El Aragonés Hoy: Informe sobre la situación actual de la lengua aragonesa* (Huesca: Publicacions d'o Consello d'a Fabla Aragonesa), p. 66.

¹⁸ Victor Manuel Lacambra Gambau and Luis Felipe Serrate, 'Identidad cultural, lengua y políticas lingüísticas', *Autas d'a II trobada de estudios y rechiras arredol d'a luenga aragonesa y a suya literatura*, ed. by Francho Nagore Laín, Francho Rodés Orquín, and Chesus Vázquez Obrador, (Huesca: IEA & CFA, 2001), p. 58.

according to Schiffman¹⁹ language policy is ultimately grounded in linguistic culture, that is, the set of cultural forms, assumptions, ways of thinking about language, attitudes and religio-historical circumstances associated with a particular language, I agree with him that typologising language policies without considering the background in which they occur is doubtlessly worthless.

However, there is an important distinction to be made, between legislating for the use of languages and their protection and guaranteeing language maintenance and equitable treatment of their speakers²⁰. In fact, the home language choices of native speakers will ultimately determine the degree of language maintenance, rather than any external choices imposed by communities or institutions.²¹

As for Aragon, on the contrary, language maintenance successes are due to the encouragement by the cultural associations which support the revitalisation of the language. Schiffman rightly states that we cannot assess the chances of success of policies without reference to culture, belief systems, and attitudes about language. Conversely, through cultural support, belief in the language and positive attitudes towards it, language policies would have more chances of success.²²

In April 1997, the Aragonese Parliament ruled that the government must present a Languages Law, which, beginning with the "co-officiality" of Aragonese and Catalan in the areas where they are used, would develop article 7 of the Aragonese Charter of Autonomy; until then, the Aragonese leadership had delayed this project, repeatedly

¹⁹ Schiffman, p. 54.

²⁰ Romaine, *The impact of language policy on endangered languages*, pp. 240-68.

²¹ McCarty and Watahomigie, pp.309-325.

²² Schiffman, p. 56.

postponing the deadline. In 1998, a Draft Bill for the Languages Law was drawn up; in October 1999, the socialist Marcelino Iglesias Ricou, president of the Aragonese Government, announced the preparation of a languages law, aiming towards co-officiality, in order to preserve and empower Catalan and Aragonese; and in 2001, the last attempt to acknowledge trilingualism in Aragon was made, with the presentation of the Draft Bill for the Aragonese Languages Law, which was only ratified in 2009.²³

In early 2001, a project called “Ley de lenguas de Aragón” was proposed to the local Aragonese government, campaigning for the “co-officiality” of minority languages in Aragon. After a lengthy period of debate, this process still remained inactive seven years later due to a lack of consensus. Whereas the right-of-centre Spanish Government only wanted to protect the various linguistic varieties, the other four regional and more left-of-centre parties, advocated for the “co-officiality” implied by the project and lobbied for legitimacy to be granted to a language long deserving recognition²⁴. This project established that Aragonese and Catalan would become “co-official” languages in Aragon together with Spanish in the areas where these languages currently predominate. It aimed to see the standardisation of Aragonese, Catalan and the vernacular varieties completed, and it especially insisted that they be protected. It relied on these languages being promoted voluntarily and encouraged bilingualism in teaching, administrative formalities and the names of places and people²⁵. The project was specially designed for the 206

²³ Chusé Raúl Usón, ‘Rolde de Estudios Aragoneses: 25 años en defensa del Aragón trilingüe’ in *Pasar haciendo caminos Rolde de Estudios Aragoneses (1977- 2002)* (Zaragoza: Rolde de Estudios Aragoneses, 2002), p. 112.

²⁴ ‘IU dice que aprobará la Ley de Lenguas’, *El Periódico de Aragón*, 7 August 2009.

²⁵ ‘Anteproyecto de Ley de Lenguas de Aragón’ Índice Consello d'a Fabla Aragonesa <www.consello.org/pdf/abamproyecto2001.pdf> [accessed 10 December 2010].

Aragonese villages where the use of Aragonese and Catalan prevails, since according to the project, Aragonese, or its vernacular varieties, is commonly used in 145 villages and their inhabitants would be able to receive schooling in the vernacular language if they so wished.

After much debate and many amendments, on the 22nd December 2009 the “Ley de lenguas” was finally ratified; although, not all the promised or hoped for pledges were endorsed. Aragonese and Catalan were not made official in Aragon and due to the current economic downturn it will be very unlikely that enough money will be destined to the promotion of Aragonese and its use in the media and the teaching of the language in schools.²⁶

3.5 Normalisation and normativisation

In order for Aragonese to be truly normalised it must be used regularly in administration, in liturgy and especially in teaching. It must also be used in the media (traditionally the province of the dominant culture) in the form of a regular column in a daily newspaper, or a sporadic programme exposing the language on radio or television, such as a cultural celebration or a religious festival. However, the media will only report what they perceive to be significant community activity. Hence the first step is to enhance that activity in community locations, such as churches, social centres, and town halls. The support of universities, intellectuals and writers and the most dynamic cultural institutions is needed. However, in the daily press and on television, Aragonese is non-existent. The situation is similar for radio, where the broadcasts consist of sporadic programmes made by

²⁶ ‘300 alumnos estudian aragones en los colegios de la provincia’ Federazion de Ligallos de Fablans de l’aragones <<http://www.fablanszaragoza.com>> [accessed 10 December 2010].

associations defending Aragonese²⁷. One example is the programme "Os biernes", broadcast by Radio Sobrarbe every Friday from 10.30 to 11am; it is an informative forum, where the news headlines from the week are summarised and briefly discussed. As far as teaching is concerned, Aragonese classes are only available in four centres in the province of Huesca. As for universities, most of the professors at the University of Zaragoza still do not believe that Aragonese exists.

In the last 35 years there has been a small increase in the number of books published in Aragonese, the number of radio programmes, literary competitions, journals, campaigns, courses and associations. Some necessary guidelines in normativising the language which are indispensable for language planning have also been established.²⁸ There has even been an alternative movement as part of the normalisation process, the defaced road signs in many countries, in which names in the dominant language have been painted over their Welsh, Basque or Gaelic equivalents have also proliferated in Aragon. These usually provide a real indication of the acceptability of a language's presence in the wider community. They demonstrate the presence of a community dynamism which has gone further than the law permits in order to express corporate linguistic identity.²⁹ Another remarkable fact has been the incipient presence of the language in towns, from where it had almost disappeared before. It is not yet clear though if the prestige of the language

²⁷ *Fuellas d'informazion d'o Consello d'a Fabla Aragonesa*, March-April 2002.

²⁸ Rosa Bercero, 'Normativisation, a priority for Aragonese', *Proceedings of the First Mercator International Symposium on Minority Languages and Research* (2003) <<http://www.aberystwyth.ac.uk/mercator/html>>.

²⁹ Crystal, p. 114.

used in towns will be a constant factor, as it seems to be linked closely to political interests that may change.³⁰

It seems that the Aragonese language will progress if its speakers increase their prestige, their wealth relative to the dominant community, or if they increase their legitimate power in the eyes of the dominant community. Prestige comes when people take notice. An endangered community therefore needs to make its presence felt within the wider community. It needs to raise its visibility, or profile. In Aragon, people should adopt the habit of using Aragonese, and this requires that they have regular access to it. Sporadic language activities need to be replaced by activities in which the language has a predictable presence, thus enabling a process of consolidation to take place.³¹

Over the centuries, there does not seem to have been a centre of power, institution, particular city or dialect, writer or grammarian in Aragon capable of bringing about the universal acceptance of the form of Aragonese that it used or proposed. Yet, there has been no shortage of voices pointing out the need to rely upon the teaching of a specific writer, institution or dialect. As has occurred with other languages in Spain (for example, Galician), the writers had no written tradition that they could become part of. Since there were no available rules, they had recourse to their own dialect and their own criteria, which led, to a greater or lesser extent, to Castilianisms, hyper-Aragonesisms, pseudo-evolutions and vulgarisms, due to the lack of a referent or adequate linguistic preparation, and it was difficult to shake off everything that was not authentically Aragonese and act according to certain congruent and uniform linguistic criteria. For this reason, it was, and

³⁰ Axel Mahlau, 'Some Aspects of the Standardization of the Basque Language' *Standardization of National Languages. Symposium on Language Standardization* ed. by Utta von Gleich, and Ekkehard Wolff (Hamburg: UNESCO, 1991), p. 66 <<http://www.unesco.org>> [accessed 12 February 2003].

³¹ Crystal, p. 83.

still is, necessary to create a fully normalised version of Aragonese, accepted by all, with a linguistic model close to it, so that the speakers can identify with it; so that the awareness of ethnic distinction, of a community with its own culture, expressed through its own language, does not get completely erased; and in order not to accelerate the Castilian assimilation which limits the language's use, condemning it to a certain death.³²

With regard to the future of Aragonese, the normalisation is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for survival. A problem that needs to be tackled in the process of linguistic normalisation of Aragonese, is the normativisation of the language. To aid in the process of normativisation, the Academia de l'Aragonés was created in 2006. However, not everybody was pleased with the inclusion in the Academia of vernacular speakers who were not academics. Therefore, and due to differences of opinion, there was a division in the Aragonese speaking society that needs to be patched without delay, since a language without a defined standard variant tends to lose prestige among speakers and given a sociolinguistic situation like the one in Aragon, Aragonese will become a weaker enemy against the pressure of Castilian Spanish.

If by normalisation we understand “the restitution of a situation in which a nowadays minority language is given back its former status and “normal” use in society”³³ as it is widely used in the Catalan and Basque sociolinguistic literature, then Aragon has progressed steadily in that domain, including some necessary guidelines in normativising the language which are indispensable for language planning. These are the chronological events:

³² Fuellas, March-April 2002.

³³ Mahlau, p. 65.

In the seventies a movement started to dignify the Aragonese language with papers in conferences, press articles, courses in Aragonese and the first few radio programs.

In 1974 the first provisional proposal for the standard orthographical norms of Aragonese was adopted.

In 1976 the “Consello d’a Fabla Aragonesa” was born and it was formalised in Huesca two years later. Its main objectives have remained since then: “the defence, promotion study and dissemination of Aragonese in all its aspects”.³⁴

In 1977 five books were published in Aragonese, as well as the “Diccionario Aragonés” by Rafael Andolz³⁵. This dictionary, with 40,000 entries is the most complete dictionary of Aragonese until now; although it is dialectal rather than normative. The first “Gramática de la Lengua Aragonesa” was also published. It was the first vision of the Aragonese language from a synchronic and supradialectal point of view. It constituted a first step towards the systematisation of the morphology and syntax.

At the end of the seventies, campaigns like “L’Aragonés t’a Escuela” promoting the teaching of Aragonese and “L’Aragonés Cofizial” promoting the officiality of the Aragonese language in the Aragonese society took place.

In the eighties the number of courses in Aragonese increased, new associations that fought for the existence of Aragonese were born and books in Aragonese were published in increasing number each year. Thus, from 1971 to 1975 an average of 0.6 books in

³⁴ Artur Quintana, ‘Chenesis y carauteristicas de l’aragonés común’ in *Autas d’a I trobada de estudios y rechiras arredol d’a luenga aragonesa y a suya literatura*, ed. by Franchó Nagore Laín, Franchó Rodés Orquín, and Chesus Vázquez Obrador, (Huesca: IEA & CFA, 1999), pp. 31-42.

³⁵ Nagore Laín, (1998), p.268.

Aragonese were published, the number increased to 3.8 from 1976 to 1980, 4 books from 1981 to 1985 and reaching 6.8 from 1986 to 1990.³⁶

A revitalisation movement was begun in the early seventies, with the primary objective of establishing a standard written form of Aragonese, as had previously been achieved with other Spanish languages, such as Basque and Catalan. The standard orthographical rules had been adopted in 1974 and later accepted by the “Consello d’a Fabla Aragonesa”. They continued to be improved and completed through several years of debates at this association and were then recommended as a provisional norm. They were published in the journal *Fuellas*³⁷ in 1982, 1983 and 1986, having been elaborated, for the most part, according to phonological criteria. However, in 1987 the first *Congreso ta ra normalización de l’Aragonés* was held and the standard orthographical rules that have been used for the majority of works published in Aragonese were agreed upon, although there are still some writers and local groups who don’t use them in their publications. Those who appreciated the work which was produced following the Congress of 1987 wrote:

“O trayeuto enta ra normalidá ortografica se trobó, doncas, culminato, encara que sin creyar un aragonés estándar u común d’estilo monolítico, ye dizir, seguidor d’uno de os dialeutos, sino que s’empezipió ro paso enta o respeto interdialeutal, anque establindo un corpus lingüístico etimoloxicamén y lesicograficamén adecuado –escoscato de barbarismos y formas bulgars que yeran

³⁶ Franchó Nagore Laín, ‘O proceso de normalización de l’aragonés’ in *Autas d’o XVIII Congreso de luengas menazatas y normalización* Association Internationale pour la Défense des Langues et Cultures Menacées ed. by Franchó Nagore Laín, and Pilar Puig López (Huesca: CFA, 1999), p. 46.

³⁷ *Fuellas* is a fortnightly journal in Aragonese, published by the Consello d’a Fabla Aragonesa in Huesca.

dentratas, deterioratas y consolidatas dimpués drento de os cambos fonético y morfoloxico- y ortograficamén y sintauticamén azeutable y estable”³⁸

In the nineties the interest in Aragonese deepened and there were more young people interested in learning, improving and rediscovering Aragonese. An average of eight books in Aragonese per year were published indicating an increase in consumption of Aragonese printed works. Indeed, according to Marcuello³⁹, in the last twenty years, there have been more books and magazines written in Aragonese and more works have been translated into it than in the last ten centuries. Aragonese society was more aware of the existing situation of the language and as a consequence of the pressure exerted by the political parties and institutions more improvements were implemented.

In 1997 the “Tresoro d’a Lengua Aragonesa” was born as a lexicography research project in order to create a database of Aragonese vocabulary and expressions which would help in the codification and normalisation of the Aragonese language.

In 1998 the first draft for the “Anteproyecto de la Ley de Lenguas” was devised. Demands had been made to the Aragonese local Government for this bill a year earlier.

In the first decade of the millennium so far advancements in the process of normativisation have taken place but the Aragonese governing bodies are still failing to engage fully.

In 2000 a provisional proposal for the creation of a “Consello Asesor de l’Aragonés” was put forward. This consulting body would be established a year later.

³⁸ Manel García Grau, ‘A normalizazi3n de l’aragon3s’ *Luenga & Fablas*, 2, (1998).

³⁹ Chaime Marcuello, *Señas de Identidad: Ensayos Sociopolíticos* (Huesca: Ediciones Suelves, 1996), p.126.

In 2001 the “Consello Asesor de l’Aragonés” was created. Its objectives are to make progress in the process of codification of standard written Aragonese as well as the processes of normativisation and normalisation of Aragonese.⁴⁰

In 2001 the project called “Ley de Lenguas de Aragón” was proposed to the local Aragonese Government arguing for the “co-officiality” of minority languages in Aragon.

In 2006 the Academia de l’Aragonés was created, although it brought about considerable turmoil due to the difference in opinions of the participants.

The languages law was ratified in 2009 but only Castilian Spanish remains the official language.

In 2010 the controversial new standard orthographical norms were published much to the displeasure of certain sectors of the Aragonese speaking society.

Since then, mostly due to political disagreements in Aragon, the whole process has stalled and no new initiatives have been allowed to prosper.

Although it is relatively rare nowadays for a Western European language, even a minority one, not to be recognised officially, that is the case with Aragonese. For the use of Aragonese to be normalised it should first be recognised officially as a language by all the political institutions and political bodies. Otherwise, its development may continue to be hindered by the lack of funding and government support. It needs to be taught under a regulated system of instruction and in all the schools of the locations where Aragonese is still known. Its usage should be promoted and fostered increasingly in the media, administration and public signposts. Assistance should also be given to literary

⁴⁰ They also intend to: Revise and correct texts published by “Consello d’a Fabla Aragonesa”, act as linguistic consultants, identify through resolutions the most appropriate codification of standard written Aragonese and the correct application of graphic norms.

production, music and video recordings, and to the broader “cultural industry” in the vernacular language. In order to achieve this, the political intervention that eases the way through political actions and legislative measures would follow if a social movement occurred.

As far as the social movement is concerned, it has been taking place for more than 25 years. In Aragonese society, the Aragonese language is generally recognised and society largely calls for its recuperation in the areas where it is still known or spoken. Despite lack of institutional support, the Aragonese society has relentlessly organised itself into cultural associations to overcome the inertia of the public bodies and they themselves, have carried the whole weight of the scientific and economic research, the teaching, promotion, awareness and spread of Aragonese for the past two and a half decades. Watson⁴¹ observes that the association of minority languages like Irish Gaelic and Scottish with an unsophisticated, nonlearned folk culture is common. Similarly, in Aragon, some of these cultural associations have concentrated on folk songs, poetry, dance and traditional tales as discernible ways of expressing their attachment to the language. The political institutions on the other hand have only recently started to become aware of the popularity of the language movement. However, their awareness did not manifest itself sufficiently to agree on the inclusion of questions related to linguistic status in the 2001 census.

Unfortunately, in order to achieve a process of normalisation, it is not enough to have a social awareness movement. A process of normativisation must exist in parallel. A

⁴¹ Seosamh Watson, ‘Scottish and Irish Gaelic: The giant’s bedfellows’ in *Investigating obsolescence: Studies in language contraction and death*, ed. by Nancy Dorian (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 41-59.

conjunction of phonetical, morphosyntactical and lexical norms and the acceptance of these by the whole of the linguistic community, by the education authorities, and public institutions is needed. The convergence of both processes, social normalisation and normativisation of grammatical codifications depends to a great extent on the solidifying of the process and its consolidation.

Due to the disagreements regarding the establishment of a standard written form, the members of “Consello d’a Fabla Aragonesa” made an initial proposal to put forward a recommendation for a written form and create a “standard written Aragonese”. Joseph⁴² notes that a standard is often based on the variety used by an urban culture, however, in the Alto Aragon area, the main city, Huesca, is virtually Spanish speaking in its entirety. Favouring one variety could have easily brought resentment. Consequently, a different approach was followed, to avoid a comparable situation to the one that still persists in Romantsch speaking areas of Switzerland, where several attempts at standardisation, dealing with the five main regional varieties have been rejected.⁴³ As it had previously been achieved with other languages like Basque, the strategy was to accept the dialectal varieties in oral use and to concentrate on the standardisation of the written form of the language. Thus, although the dialectal forms could still be widely used in conversation for a long time, the increasing presence of any standard written production would pave the way for future oral interactions. The main aim was to prevent the dialects from growing further apart. The view that the traditional dialects would be able to exist alongside the

⁴² John Earl Joseph, *Eloquence and Power: The Rise of Language Standards and Standard Languages* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1987), pp. 1-2, 16-18.

⁴³ Julia Sallabank, ‘Writing in an unwritten language: the case of Guernsey French’, *Reading Working papers in Linguistics*, 6 (2002), 217-244.

standardised form, silenced some of the polemics that constantly accompanied the efforts of a standardisation. This creation of a unified written language has become an urgent need due to the changes in society and the transmission of the language. Up to the 20th century most Aragonese speakers were illiterate and the language was passed down through the family in a fairly stable sociolinguistic community. However, in order to preserve or even revitalise it, the language must be adapted to new functions and situations.

The consideration of setting general guidelines for a unified written Aragonese language implied that the normativisation process of Aragonese was already underway. The decisive breakthrough came in 1987 with the acceptance of graphic norms. As far as the other aspects are concerned, the graphic norms are merely a convention, but grammatical aspects cannot be easily codified.⁴⁴ It is vital firstly to make available a large number of linguistic studies and afterwards, following the criteria set by linguists and writers, to canalize a finite set of grammatical norms which will be considered as fundamental in the long term. In this process of progressive acceptance of standard norms, as far as the morphosyntax is concerned, literary creation and instruction in the language are of great importance. The aim does not involve imposing the set of norms by decree, but rather by gradual dissemination. In order to foster that, in Aragon, literary prizes are promoted. These encourage the normalisation of the use of Aragonese, as a literary quality and an accurate composition help towards normativisation because the effort to write better and with a richer Aragonese creates an advancement in the model of standard written Aragonese. In the running of these competitions, it becomes clear that standard written

⁴⁴ Nagore Laín, 'O proceso de normalización de l'aragonés', p. 36.

Aragonese does not run contrary to the dialectal modalities, quite the opposite, it affirms them. In fact, currently local variants are also accepted, even morphologically and syntactically.

Since 1987 there have been some developments in several grammatical areas but there is still progress to be made:

In the field of lexicography, there is no official normative dictionary yet, although the ambitious project “Tresoro d’a Luenga Aragonesa” now includes 80,000 separate entries from different geographical areas. However, it is predicted that this project will take at least a further 10 to 15 years to approach completion.

The lexicon currently still lacks guidelines and the dialectal variants are all in use although those in accordance with the traditional phonetic system of the language are favoured in opposition to terms heavily influenced by either Spanish or Catalan. The final objective of lexis standardisation would be a monolingual dictionary, ultimately including usage proposal.

Phonetically, a canalisation is needed. It is clear that to achieve a standard written Aragonese, only the words that adjust themselves to the Aragonese phonetic tradition could be incorporated. As a base, Nagore⁴⁵ proposes that medieval Aragonese and toponymy could be accepted. However, standard written Aragonese should not substitute local varieties but defend them against the impoverishment and erosion they are currently subjected to due to the heavy Spanish pressure. The codification of morphological and

⁴⁵ Nagore, ‘O proceso de normalización de l’aragonés’, p. 78.

syntactical aspects currently enjoys flexibility but in the long term a unique referential form should be established.

In order to clarify this standard written modality, a consulting body, the “Consello Asesor de l’Aragones” has been created to align the general criteria for correction, establishment of common aspects and proposal of adjusted versions. This body aims to achieve official backing from the main provincial governing authority and ultimately respond to the Aragonese local Government. So that it is possible to fully implement linguistic policy, legal instruments will also be needed to facilitate this implementation.

The normalisation of the language is the only possibility for survival of the Aragonese language in a modern society. The Spanish constitution grants some autonomous rights to the regions, such as their own governments responsible for health, economic planning, mass media and education. Consequently, the Aragonese language should be increasingly present in the administration, and in the streets, but above all, it should be introduced at all levels of education. For that to be achieved, it is paramount for the autonomous Aragonese government to have an interest and to devote the resources to protect the language. However, in the case of Aragonese there will be no normalisation without prior normativisation, therefore work must continue on the grammatical codification of the language in order to succeed.

Part II

Introduction

The analysis of the data obtained through my questionnaire will provide evidence in order to test the hypotheses pertaining to identity and to language policy in the case of Ayerbe.

The Aragonese language, according to Fishman's Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale can be found somewhere between stage 7, where most users are to some extent if not socially integrated, at least an ethnolinguistically active population, although not all of them are beyond child-bearing age; and stage 6, since although there is a strong concern with the disappearance of the intergenerationally diverse family, and Spanish is used for matters of "greater formality and technicality", Aragonese is not very often "the normal language of informal and spoken interactions between and within all three generations of the family". One of his recommendations to guarantee a future for the language would be to secure a younger congregation of Aragonese as second language users¹, and that strategy has been in place for the past few decades with adult evening classes and some extra curricular lessons for children. However, in order to guarantee an intergenerational transmission, there is a need for more awareness of the linguistic reality in Aragon and more visibility of the language in and outside the Aragonese region.

The question of the linguistic reality in Aragon, has given rise in the past few decades to a considerable interest and it continues to do so, as the recent political debates over the ratification of the "ley de lenguas" in 2009 proved. It was in the seventies that the

¹ Fishman, *Reversing Language Shift*, pp. 87-94.

movement of linguistic recognition, the *Renaxedura* (with the *Consello d'a Fabla Aragonesa* as the forerunner) was conceived, and since then it has gained social significance. In the seventies and eighties, outside Aragon and even up to a point, in some areas in Aragon, not many people knew of the existence of a non Castillian-Spanish linguistic reality in that Autonomous Community. Once it had established itself in many local councils in Aragon in the nineties, it was the appearance of a new political party – Chunta Aragonesista² – in Congress in 2000 that unveiled the Aragonese linguistic reality to the rest of the country. Its very name contributed to the novelty, since its origin was not easily identifiable, as it did not quite sound either Spanish or Catalan.

Since the Spanish Constitution was established democratically in 1978, most minority languages in Spain have managed to subscribe to its third article with varying degrees of success and in accordance with the Statutes of the devolved communities where they are used, they have progressed onto securing an official status. However, the attempts to assure the officiality for Aragonese and Catalan in Aragon have been unsuccessful. Edwards acknowledges that language loss has little to do with linguistic merit and almost everything to do with the imbalanced exercise of social and political power³. Therefore, and considering the political situation in Aragon, it is not surprising that every attempt to create and implement a linguistic policy for the region has failed so far.⁴

² Cha Chunta Aragonesista <<http://www.chunta.com>> [accessed 2 February 2010].

³ John Edwards, *Language, Society and Identity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), p. 84.

⁴ The political parties in power for the Autonomous Aragonese Government have been the Aragonese branches of Spanish national political parties and not the regionalist political parties, therefore no move has been made towards legislating for the use of Aragonese, and although the 'Ley de lenguas' was recently passed, there is a general air of unhappiness about its ability to help legislate in favour of the Aragonese language.

In article 7 of the Estatuto de Autonomía in 1982⁵ there was a reference to some “modalidades lingüísticas” without going into any more detail as to what they were or which they were, thus illustrating the complexity of the linguistic situation in Aragon. The ambiguity of that first version was improved in 2007 when “lenguas” and “modalidades lingüísticas” are mentioned, and it confirmed that a Cortes de Aragon law, would establish “las zonas de uso predominante de las lenguas y modalidades propias de Aragón” as well as protecting and favouring “el uso de las lenguas propias” in those areas where they are predominantly used.⁶ This was a great improvement since 1982. However, due to a failed request for an amendment by CHA asking for a change from: “Las lenguas y modalidades lingüísticas propias de Aragón” to “El aragonés y el catalán, lenguas propias de Aragón, así como sus modalidades”⁷, those “lenguas propias” in Aragon that were to be protected are still not identified.

Despite the fact that linguistic issues had created some turmoil over the years in Aragonese society, it was only comparatively recently that institutions and local public authorities, as well as provincial and autonomic ones, started to realize that in order to unravel the complex linguistic reality in Aragon there was a need to look into it further in order to satisfy the demands made by cultural associations, as well as political and social interest groups. This area of interest, which was until quite recently the realm of the linguistic professionals, has now incorporated public opinion and vernacular speakers starting with the special commission called upon to debate a possible linguistic policy

⁵ *Estatuto de Autonomía de Aragón de 1982* (Zaragoza: Diputación General de Zaragoza), p. 10.

⁶ ‘Proposición de ley de uso, protección y promoción de las lenguas propias de Aragon’ Consello d'a Fbla Aragonesa <<http://www.consello.org/pdf/lailuengaspsoe.pdf>> [accessed 3 February 2010].

⁷ Estatuto de Autonomía de Aragón Cortes de Aragon <<http://www.cortesaragon.es>> [accessed 3 February 2010].

study in Aragon in the “pleno de las Cortes de Aragon” in 1996 and more specifically on the lead-up to the creation of the Academia de la Lengua Aragonesa in 2006. At present there is a need for more urgent attention from public institutions in order to promote linguistic policy.

A special commission created by the Aragonese Parliament to study linguistic policy in Aragon met throughout 1996 with many academics together with representatives of institutions and all walks of society linked to the distinctive linguistic reality in Aragon. Many issues were addressed, among others by Rodés Orquín from the Consello d’a Fbla Aragonesa, who made an allusion to historical antecedents together with the current situation and invited members of the commission to reflect on the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights, which declares that:

“Todas las lenguas son la expresión de una identidad colectiva y de una manera distinta de percibir y de describir la realidad, y, por tanto, han de poder gozar de unas condiciones necesarias para su desarrollo en todas las funciones; todas las comunidades lingüísticas son iguales en derecho”⁸

In addition to various comments on the multicultural and multilingual situation distinct of Aragon.

The findings of this commission in 1997 were the recognition of the multilingual reality in Aragon, stating that:

“Aragón es una Comunidad multilingüe, en la que, junto al castellano, lengua mayoritaria, conviven otras lenguas, que son el catalán y el aragonés, con sus

⁸ Cortes de Aragon <<http://www.bases.cortesaragon.es> > [accessed 14 March 2011]

distintas modalidades. Las lenguas minoritarias de Aragón (el catalán y el aragonés, en cuyo ámbito están comprendidas las diversas modalidades lingüísticas aragonesas) son una riqueza cultural propia de la Comunidad Autónoma y forman parte de su patrimonio histórico; por ello han de ser especialmente protegidas por la Administración”.⁹

The outcome was the recommendation for a linguistic legal project (ley de lenguas) that would explore the linguistic issues in Aragon with a view to establish the bases for an applicable linguistic policy. After a delay of more than 20 years the “ley de lenguas” was passed in December 2009¹⁰. However, despite the significant feat of recognising the trilingual situation in Aragon, unfortunately the language will not be able to count on the real tools needed to guarantee its survival, its standardisation. There is a strong feeling that since the last census for Aragonese was in 1981, more linguistic census and sociolinguistic studies of the areas where the Aragonese language is used should have been needed in order to create a better informed “ley de lenguas”.

The fundamental objective of my study revolves around the sociolinguistic reality in Ayerbe as a town where Aragonese is in use. The Aragonese language fits the requisites provided in Chapter 1.1 to be an endangered language. With the aim of substantiating that, there are several questions included in the questionnaire (Question 15 & 16 + Question 21) regarding the participants’ knowledge and use of the language together with the perception of whether or not the language is used. The awareness and perception of the

⁹ Cortes de Aragon <<http://www.bases.cortesaragon.es> > [accessed 15 March 2011].

¹⁰ *Ley de Lenguas de Aragón* Cortes de Aragon <<http://www.cortesaragon.es/usuarios/documentacion/documentacion/17-18dic/lenguas.pdf>> [accessed 14 March 2011].

participants is one of the main elements of the analysis and the basic assertion is that the linguistic reality in Ayerbe is best known from what the subjects of the study know or believe about it. Following Lambert's studies¹¹ on attitudes towards languages, or towards speakers of the language which show the importance of linguistic attitudes regarding issues like linguistic loyalty, the objective of this research was to analyse the situation of languages in contact as found in Ayerbe and to relate it to minority languages. In Ayerbe there are mostly two codes used in an unequal manner and therefore the objective was to analyse through a questionnaire whether all individuals knew both codes¹² as well as their behaviour and attitudes towards them.

One of the fundamental questions that is proposed when debating linguistic reality, remains to be solved: Which are the non-Castillian linguistic variants that are used in some areas in Aragon (other than Catalan or dialects of Catalan used in the Franja section limiting with Catalonia, where there seems to be a greater consensus)?

The first part of this question refers to the linguistic status that the autochthonous speaking forms that are not Castillian Spanish have. Are they dialects, languages or just an incorrect way of speaking? That is what is asked in questions 23 and 24, (Q 23+24). The second part refers to which are these registers we are talking about, which in turn implies the need for a fundamental question asked beforehand: Is there only one vernacular linguistic variant or are there several variants or local languages more or less connected among

¹¹ Wallace E. Lambert, 'A Social Psychology of Bilingualism', *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 60 (1967), 44-51.

¹² Francisco José Llera Ramo, *Los asturianos y la lengua asturiana* (Asturias: Serviciu de Publicaciones del Principáu d'Asturies, 1994), pp. 14-17.

themselves? The denomination of the language used will depend greatly on the answer given to question 33. If the answer is that several local languages coexist, local and dialectal denominations will occur, that way, in the rest of the Alto Aragon area there could be chistabino, patués, cheso, ansotano or panticuto, in Ayerbe it would be Ayerbense. If the answer settles on the unity of the different local registers, other unitary denominations like Aragonese or *fabla* will apply. In turn, the demand for institutions to act, and for any action based on any study to become concrete protection and promotion measures, would depend greatly on the answers given to these questions just mentioned, that is, the status and the unity conferred to the vernacular ways of speaking in some areas in Alto Aragon. A hypothetical process of linguistic recuperation which would make possible the survival of these autochthonous ways of speaking would depend on the receptivity of public opinion towards the creation of a common standard (Q35, 36), that is towards linguistic normalisation, towards the creation and social promotion of a Koiné like *Aragonés común*, given that if a minority language is not normalised its survival is virtually impossible. These questions reflect the need for linguistic policy and linguistic planning in Aragon as per the definition by Cooper seen in chapter 1.5 and that is the reason why participants were specifically asked about the standardisation of Aragonese which was previously explored in chapter 3.5.

Although there can be a debate on the territorial and demographical reach of these linguistic registers, there is a general agreement in circumscribing them to the Alto Aragon area. However this agreement does not extend to settling on the exact limits of the area, nor the exact demographical referent of this linguistic domain (Q 29) depending on who

defines it¹³, there are a series of bordering municipalities that are or are not included in this area. It is not clear either whether the hypothetical linguistic policy that could be carried out in the future, should be circumscribed to the Alto Aragon area or whether it should comprise the whole Aragonese Autonomous Community.

This is not a study about the nature of what is used in the Alto Aragon area; its main aim is not to discuss whether what is spoken in the Alto Aragon area is a language or a dialect, its unity or its plurality or the extension of its geographical reach. Such questions form part of a linguistic study and are not explicitly explored in depth here, as this current research is a sociolinguistic study. However a sociolinguistic study will inevitably include linguistic aspects and I am aware of a cause-effect relationship between the two which has informed my research. The study starts from a basic social conception of the language and highlighting its social nature as a communication vehicle, the main objects are going to be the speakers, the social context in which communicative interactions take place (Q19), their attitude towards the language, beliefs, demands (Q 42, 43, 44, 53, 54) and stereotypes associated to the speakers (Q24, 25) as social agents who use the linguistic register available in order to communicate in their social life.

The essential components contained in a sociolinguistic research of this type would refer mostly to linguistic use, comprising knowledge (Q 16-19) and standardisation (Q 34-41); as well as psychosocial conduct, focusing on affective conducts and cognitive conducts. Question 29 refers to affective conducts regarding linguistic identity, whereas Question 30

¹³ Fernando Romanos Hernando, *Al límite: La pervivencia del aragonés en las comarcas del norte de Zaragoza*. (Zaragoza: Diputación de Zaragoza, 2003).

refers to loyalty to the primary code (Q30). As far as cognitive conducts are concerned the aspect dealt with will be linguistic conscience (Q 21) and a reference to the structural requisites for the reproduction and maintenance of the language (intergenerational transmission (Q 22), education (Q 44), media (Q 53, 54) institutional management (Q 45, 46, etc.). All these questions which deal with main sociolinguistic topics like language endangerment, standardisation, linguistic identity and language planning, reflect in turn the different areas explored in Part I.

Based on these components and on the facts attained by exploring the context of the Aragonese language in Chapter 3, the sociolinguistic questionnaire was prepared, and its results constitute the corpus of this work. The next chapter will introduce the methodology used and the following chapter will comprise the systematic analysis of the results of the questionnaire. This analysis has been divided in seven large chapters. It starts with the socio-political context of the language which proceeds into the main topics, the linguistic identity in Ayerbe and the linguistic competence and use of Aragonese. These are followed by the most essential linguistic perception and linguistic consumption which lead on to the issue of normalisation and normativisation of Aragonese. In the last chapter, linguistic expectations and linguistic demands of public opinion in Ayerbe are analysed.

1. Methodology

Introduction

There are nearly 6,000 languages in the world, and according to the Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger, approximately half of them are endangered, as a consequence they will disappear in a maximum of 2 to 3 generations; Aragonese is one of them. One of the main reasons for languages to disappear is the interruption of transmission between parents and their children. In the case of Aragonese, the generational transmission is either broken or in the process of being broken. That is why researching any aspect of the Aragonese language that can contribute to its survival is so significant.¹

Ayerbe is found in the North West of Aragon, in the province of Huesca and it is part of the Plana de Uesca area, twenty eight kilometres from the capital city.² Due to its location, it is considered to belong to an area where the use of the Aragonese language finds itself in a state of decline compared to Castilian Spanish. With my study I wanted to ascertain the extent to which this is true. The objective was to conduct a questionnaire amongst residents in Ayerbe in order to explore their language use, their perceptions of the language and its use, their linguistic awareness and their affinity to the concept of Aragonese identity.

I originally thought of choosing a village called Marracos as the object of my study where I would have been more familiar with the participants. It is located in the same area, although further south which would have meant that the effect of decline of the Aragonese

¹ *Atlas of the world languages in danger*. UNESCO <<http://www.unesco.org/culture/languages-atlas/>> [accessed 7 May 2011].

² Alfonso Zapater, *Aragón pueblo a pueblo. Tomo II* (Zaragoza: Ediciones Aguaviva, 1986), p. 369.

language could have been more accentuated. However, due to its small size, it would have been impossible to find enough participants distributed equally in all the age groups. Therefore I decided to choose Ayerbe, since it is the biggest village in the area and it would sustain a large enough population for me to find an adequate amount of people who would have lived in the village permanently from all age groups. Additionally, due to its size of just over one thousand inhabitants, the level of instruction and social class are also fully represented in Ayerbe.

1.1 Research Methodology

1.1.1. Data collection and analysis

To collect the data I decided to use a questionnaire, which can be seen in Appendix I. Although there are advantages and disadvantages to using questionnaires to acquire data, one of the advantages of using this form of research is that they may be adapted to collect information that can be generalised; the questions are standardised as much as possible so that they mean the same thing to all the respondents and when they are done face to face, the person in charge of collecting the data, as it was my case, can clarify the questions, should the need arise.³

Self-completion questionnaires, which tend to be done by post, are at times subject to response bias, thus not being replied by people who may have reading or visual impairments. However, if an interviewer is sat across the table from the respondent, there is a good control of the response situation.⁴ That is why I did a combination of the self-

³ Colin Robson, *Real world research: A resource for social scientists and practitioner-researcher* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), p. 234.

⁴ Robson, pp. 238-239.

completion and face to face methods, which, as a consequence of my being there, it meant that the level of “non-responses” for the questions was almost always negligible or in any case too small to be taken into account in the analysis.

The questionnaire used for this study was based on three other questionnaires that had been tried and tested beforehand; as a consequence I did not consider there was a need to do a pilot study.

Like in most sociolinguistic studies, I used a judgement sample to choose the subjects of the questionnaire; the selection was done according to a set of criteria on age and gender.⁵ In some societies, language is involved in co-variation with parameters like sex and age, as well as social stratification⁶ and since age stratification also reflects the change that can occur in the speech of the community as it moves through time⁷, that is why I decided to choose those parameters for the population of Ayerbe, where there was a strong possibility that the use of the Aragonese language was going to be closely linked to age and possibly to gender.

According to Wardaugh; the kind of concerns that statisticians may have about data are not necessarily the same as those of sociolinguists.⁸ Taking into account that, linguistic behaviour tends to be more widespread and more patent than many social attitudes⁹, a speech community sample will therefore not need to involve as many individuals as are

⁵ Jack K. Chambers, *Sociolinguistic Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), p. 44.

⁶ Peter Trudgill, *On Dialect. Social and Geographical Perspectives* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), p. 161.

⁷ Penelope Eckert, ‘Age as a Sociolinguistic Variable’ in *The Handbook of Sociolinguistics* ed. by Florian Coulmas (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), p. 151.

⁸ Wardaugh, p. 45.

⁹ William Labov, *The Social Stratification of English in New York City* (Washington, DC: Centre for Applied Linguistics, 1966), p. 180.

required for other behavioural surveys. Under one hundred and fifty participants would make the data manageable.¹⁰ In fact, that is the kind of numbers of participants seen in well-known studies, with a sample size of sixty participants for Trudgill, when he studied the linguistic change in the urban dialect of Norwich.¹¹

Although I did not aim to use a large sample for this study and in theory it was not big, proportionally it was much larger, since it represented ten per cent of the population.

One of the hurdles that needed to be overcome when doing fieldwork was to secure the involvement of the participants, this is partly a technical issue, and it was up to me to establish a rapport with each and every respondent for them to be fully involved¹². This was helped by the fact that I came from the area and that it could be said that I, as a researcher, almost became part of the observed group, since the whole social network was under investigation too. I was introduced to the network as a friend or almost as a member of it¹³ which I believe, contributed to reduce the potential effect of observer's paradox and allowed me to secure more uninhibited responses.

Similarly to Feagin, I also exploited the knowledge of the area, of the village, and my own surname, which is a very popular surname in Ayerbe, and despite the fact that I am not related to anybody in the village, it brought certain reassurance to the participants.¹⁴

To a certain extent, it felt as if I was conducting the questionnaires in familiar terrain, having visited the village frequently before the actual questionnaire took place. However,

¹⁰ Sankoff in Wardhaugh, pp. 158-159.

¹¹ Peter Trudgill, *Sociolinguistic Variation and Change* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002), p. 47.

¹² Robson, p. 231.

¹³ James Milroy, *Regional accents of English: Belfast* (Belfast: Blackstaff, 1981), p. 89.

¹⁴ Feagin in Chambers, p. 44.

that meant taking extra care since as Robson points out; if a familiar group or sub-group within one's society is the focus, the ethnographic approach requires of the researcher to treat it as 'anthropologically strange', and in some measure I did that, as I did not engage in conversation about the questions in the questionnaire with the participants, although many of them truly wanted to and I would have certainly liked to do so. However, I wanted the results to provide a mean of exposing presuppositions about what I could see and hear.¹⁵ Derhemi refers to the "role dilemma" faced by sociolinguists. Are researchers neutrally analytic 'machines' or do they become involved and see themselves as rescuers of the language?¹⁶ Beswick also discusses the importance of examining one's own status as a researcher¹⁷ and this prompts the question of whether personal involvement becomes a problem. Beswick uses the language of 'insiders' and 'outsiders'. 'Insiders' who are familiar with the location and the language can view the situation through the lens of experience and information. 'Outsiders' might have a more objective approach. I would regard myself as both an 'insider' because I was familiar with Ayerbe before the research but also an 'outsider' because I am not a native speaker of Aragonese. I therefore inevitably bring advantages and disadvantages of both positions to the research. However, Heller states that even 'outsiders' cannot consider themselves to be objective or neutral 'experts'.¹⁸ Researchers must accept their role as well-informed experts who bring their own experiences and perspectives to the research, although this does not invalidate their position.

¹⁵ Robson, p. 187.

¹⁶ Eda Derhemi, 'Thematic Introduction', p. 153.

¹⁷ Beswick, p. 10.

¹⁸ Monica Heller, 'Analysis and stance regarding language and social justice' in *Language Rights and Language Survival: Sociolinguistic and Sociocultural Perspectives*, ed. by Jane Freeland and Donna Patrick (Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 2004), pp. 283 – 286.

The participants were approached in different settings, it was a mixture of bars, shops, hairdressers, restaurants, the local produce co-operative, parks and private houses and even during some IT lessons. I used a manner of social network to choose the participants and used common sense to select the subjects, according to the prevailing condition of the setting I was working in¹⁹, for instance I went to an old people's home to try to fulfil the over 65 quota but I realised that many of the would-be participants had some hearing or thought processing difficulties so I desisted and discarded the questionnaires filled there. Subsequently after collecting the data, it was processed, by coding the responses and preparing it for analysis. The statistical analysis was done using SPSS 14.0, 15.0 and 16.0 and the interpretations and conclusions were drawn based on descriptive statistics and data correlation.

1.2. Sample Group

1.2.1. Background

Sampling methods are generally divided into random sampling, stratified random sampling and judgement sampling techniques²⁰. In random sampling, each individual has the same chance of being selected. A list (e.g. an electoral register) can be used and numbers assigned to each individual; a random number generator can then be used to select individuals. In stratified random sampling, the population is divided into categories and random individuals are then selected to fulfil a quota within each category. In

¹⁹ Crawford Feagin, 'Entering the community: Fieldwork' in *The Handbook of Language Variation and Change* ed. by Jack K. Chambers, Peter Trudgill, Natalie Schilling-Estes (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), p. 28.

²⁰ Zwickl, p.33.

judgement sampling, the aim is to select a representative sample without using a random number generator. This often occurs when the researcher knows the population well and does not consider random sampling necessary.

During my research it was necessary to select a representative cross-section of the population in terms of age. I therefore required a stratified sample. However, it was not possible to gain access to a central list of the population containing information about the ages of all individuals within the population. I therefore relied on asking my interviewees about their age at the start of the questionnaire and making sure that I filled a certain quota within each age group. In the vocabulary of Zwickl, my sampling technique could therefore be loosely classed as ‘stratified judgement sampling’.

When choosing the sample, I had to select among the people approached. As a preliminary question, I asked the potential candidates whether they lived in Ayerbe and whether they were originally from Ayerbe. All the candidates had to either have been born in the village or have moved there before age five. Like Labov with his 1963 study²¹, the selection of participants was thus based on the fact that they had lived in Ayerbe most of their lives; another requisite was to only have spent few or no periods of time away from the village; for example studying, holidays or military service. This way, the degree of influence from Castilian Spanish or any other language was restricted. I even included a question for reassurance since I thought it was particularly important not to have had influence of constant exposure to other variables and to avoid selecting someone who would have

²¹ William Labov, ‘The Social Motivation of a Sound Change’, *Word* 19, (1963), 273-303.

changed their speech so as not to be treated like an outsider and thus going to extremes in their language use in order to integrate.²²

I tried to avoid using a ‘convenience sample’ which Bainbridge describes as a “subset of the population polled simply because they were easy to contact” in order to prevent obtaining a sample that may display different characteristics to those that a less accessible sampling may display²³, that is why I also went into business premises and private residences to carry out some of the questionnaires.

Being aware of the lack of effectiveness that entails contacting potential participants as a complete stranger I made use of a social network in order to avoid approaching prospective subjects in that manner and consequently, I tried to elude many social hurdles.²⁴ Since I knew vaguely the members of a well known family²⁵ in the community, I asked them to introduce me to a few of their friends and on the basis of that and the fact that many people were familiar with my village, which is nearby, the network started expanding. Also, once I built a rapport with the participants, they themselves would tell me of other possible candidates.

1.2.2. Number and distribution of participants

In September 2001 I conducted sixty questionnaires in Ayerbe, upon my return to England and after analysing some of the data I realised that in the multiple choice questions where only part of the participants were eligible, the amount of data with which to work, was too

²² Like Ramón y Cajal in Xigantes (see Chapter 5: Section 2).

²³ William Sims Bainbridge, ‘Sociology of language (methods of survey sampling)’ in *Concise Encyclopaedia of Sociolinguistics* ed. by Rajend Mestrie (Oxford: Elsevier, 2001), p. 101.

²⁴ Kirk Hazen, ‘Field Methods in Modern Dialect and Variation Studies’ in *Concise Encyclopedia of Sociolinguistics* ed. by Rajend Mestrie (Oxford: Elsevier, 2001), pp. 776-777.

²⁵ Since they had own the only fresh produce store in the village.

small to make any generalisations, so I took the decision to increase the number of participants. Therefore I returned to Ayerbe in 2003 in order to carry out an extra 20 questionnaires. That would bring the total figure of participants to 80 which would provide a more proportionate and homogeneous sample and would allow me to extrapolate the results to the rest of the population of Ayerbe.

There were 1117 people registered as citizens of Ayerbe in the year 2001, in 2003 there were 1105 and the numbers have kept on dwindling since then. Ayerbe's council includes two other villages which were not taken into account as part of the sample: Los Anglis and Fontellas with 60 and 6 inhabitants respectively. When those under 18 who were not part of the sample either, were deducted from the total number of inhabitants of Ayerbe proper, 80 interviews would have represented 10% of the voting population of the village of Ayerbe. This equated to a more precise representative sample of the population which lead me to generalize when analysing the results. I chose to extrapolate my findings following the example of Llera's sociolinguistic study in Asturias²⁶, where he generalised to the rest of Asturias after having interviewed a much smaller percentage sample.

Due to the possible complexity of the questionnaire when dealing with issues that partly involved a high level of independence and an intellectual competence, only participants over the age of eighteen at the time of the questionnaire being done were accepted. Additionally, the level of instruction which had originally been considered as a variable had to be abandoned due to the lack of subjects that belonged to the older age groups with a high level of instruction.

²⁶ Llera Ramo.

1.3. Questionnaire Design

1.3.1. Design of the questionnaire

The prototype of the present questionnaire is based in the “Sociolinguistic study for Asturias” completed by Francisco Llera Ramo in 1991 and two other studies that have not been published: a “Sociolinguistic study of the language used in Alto Aragon” completed by the same author together with the Euskobarometro team in 2000 and other “Sociolinguistic questionnaire on the language use in Alto Aragon” prepared by several members of the University of Zaragoza in 1997. The model was re-elaborated and adapted to the intrinsic sociolinguistic characteristics in Ayerbe, and the result was an approximate combination of the three studies.

Using a proven questionnaire as a base has been considered the best way to measure attitudes, through finding an existing instrument that appears to have been successful rather than starting to construct a questionnaire from scratch.²⁷ Since the questionnaire for Asturias had been used as a basis for policy implementation, there was confidence in the instrument chosen. However, this means that as the questionnaires resemble each other, the same is likely to happen with the analysis.

The questionnaire was written in Spanish since writing it in Aragonese would have tested a completely different hypothesis and the title of the questionnaire was: “Cuestionario para un estudio sociolingüístico en la localidad de Ayerbe”

²⁷ British Educational Research Association - Attitude Scales < <http://www.bera.ac.uk/attitude-scales/>>[Accessed 24 February 2011].

At the top of the questionnaire, the title was followed by the name of the person who was going to conduct the questionnaire; since I was the only person involved, all the questionnaires had my name. This was followed by a short note of gratitude for taking part and a reminder that the answers were going to be kept anonymous. Having consulted the people I knew in Ayerbe, it had been intimated that people in Ayerbe, tired of “on the spot” market research questionnaires, were very protective of their anonymity. Consequently and being aware that when entering a community in order to do some research, the researcher has certain responsibility for respecting the privacy of the locals²⁸, I decided to make the introductory paragraph more official by writing it in the plural and when asked, I also mentioned that the research was linked to the University of Birmingham. For that same reason, although there was a section at the end of the questionnaire for the participants to write their names, I did not force anybody to do so if they did not want to, neither did I ask for their address, telephone or identity card numbers as is customary in other surveys in Spain. All I asked of those who did not want to give their names, for the benefit of accountability was to write the date and sign at the end.

In order to avoid any partiality towards Aragonese I told participants that I was doing a questionnaire about the way people spoke in Ayerbe. Consequently the questionnaire was “terminologically neutral”. I followed Fishman’s opinion of the term ‘variety’ which he agrees that is used in the field of sociology of language as a non value added designation, as opposed to the expression ‘language’, which often denotes ‘emotion’ and ‘opinion’.²⁹ Thus that was the concept chosen for question 15 of the questionnaire, when the

²⁸ Feagin, p. 24.

²⁹ Joshua Fishman, *The Sociology of Language: An Interdisciplinary Social Science Approach to Language in Society* (Rowley: Newbury House, 1972), p. 47.

vernacular language used in Ayerbe is introduced. In fact, only the terms “habla local” and “variedad local” were used in the questionnaire prior to reaching question 30. It was only at that point that the terms Aragonese and “fabla aragonesa” were introduced in order to be compared.

Upon deciding that I was going to make use of statistical analysis for the results obtained through the questionnaire, I chose to include the type of questions and options whose responses would be suitable to be interpreted as numerical scores. The answers were pre-coded, and the questions were closed-questions with a combination of multiple-choice, categorical, Likert scale and numerical questions included. These would produce mostly quantitative data, but I also included a few open questions which produced qualitative data in order to gain a better insight into the knowledge of the participants. However, I decided not to include too many free answer questions to avoid the reluctance of the participants to give public expression to their attitudes on controversial issues.³⁰ Although the questionnaire itself was not too long with only three and a half sides of A4 paper to avoid weariness, I also decided on a minimal amount of writing for the questionnaire to come across as easy to complete and for the potential participants not to be put off.³¹ This approach was also particularly suitable to accommodate participants of different ages and different levels of education.

³⁰ Allen L. Edwards, *Techniques of Attitude Scale Construction* (New York: Irvington Publishers, 1994), p. 3.

³¹ Abraham Naftali Oppenheim, *Questionnaire Design, Interviewing and Attitude Measurement* (London: Continuum, 1992), p. 65.

So that the type of questionnaire would be appropriate to the target participants, I chose to keep the complexity to a minimum³². Most answers only required that the participants tick a box and I kept the face-to-face setting in order to clarify any possible problems that may arise.³³

Quantitative research is generally associated with objectivity and value-free collection of data in order to prove or disprove a hypothesis. Zwickl states that “since variation is often not a question of presence versus absence but one of less and more, quantification is indispensable.”³⁴ Whilst quantitative research provides evidence of linguistic differences between different groups, qualitative research is useful in analysing the causes of this variation. Qualitative research encompasses social constructionism and interpretivism. Interpretivism is a way of thinking about research which accepts that the observer makes a difference to the observed and that reality is a human construct. Although my questionnaire was partly quantitative in nature, the statistics generated were largely descriptive³⁵ and my research methods did not fall into a purely quantitative paradigm. I felt that the blending of quantitative and qualitative techniques in the interviews was useful in helping to analyse the complex reality of the situation in Ayerbe and enabled multiple perspectives in the study.

1.3.3. Descriptive statistics

³² Robson, p. 238.

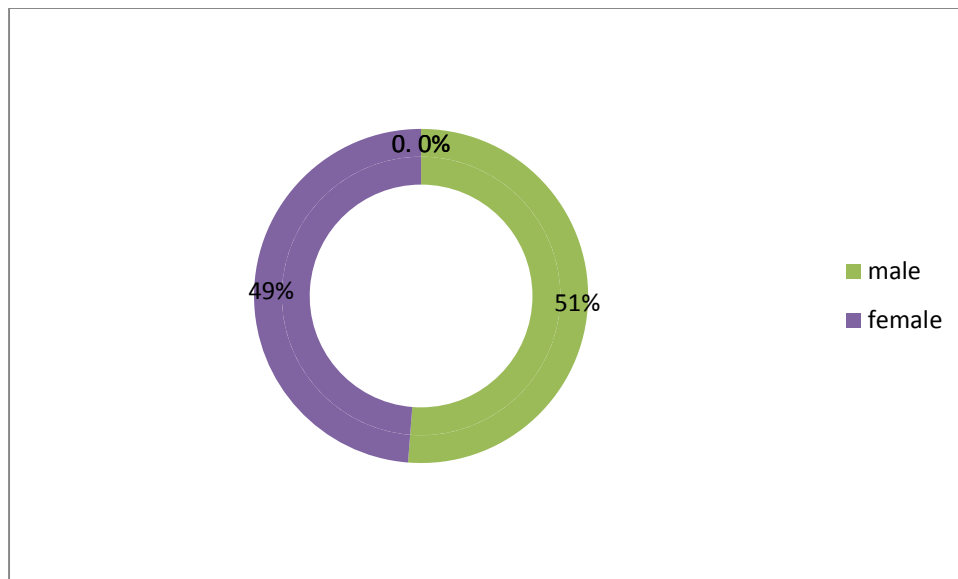
³³ Robson, p. 239.

³⁴ Zwickl, p. 31.

³⁵ Natasha Tokowicz and Tessa Warren, Quantification and Statistics in *The Blackwell Guide to Research Methods in Bilingualism and Multilingualism*, ed. by Li Wei and Melissa G. Moyer (Blackwell: Oxford, 2008), p.215.

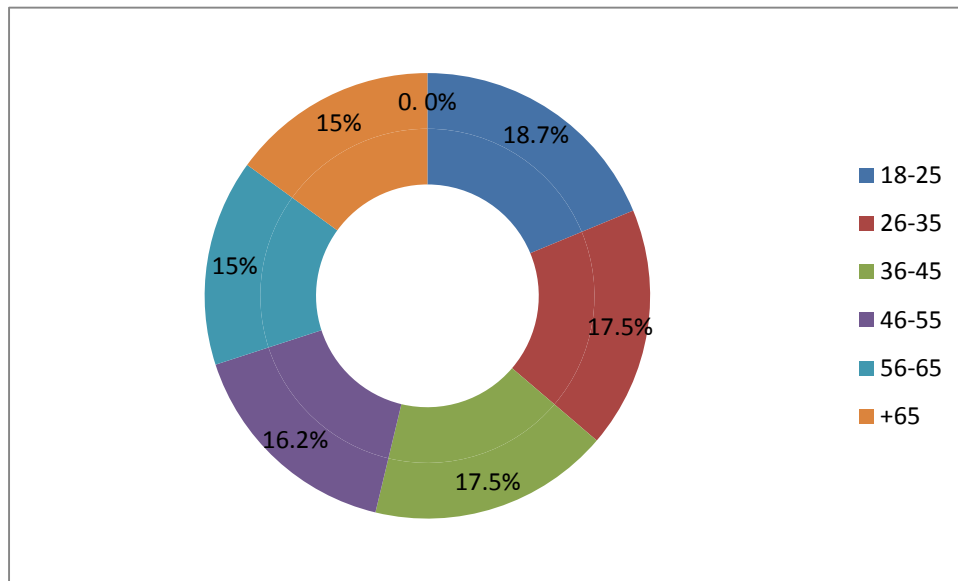
The final sample was 80 participants which represented 10% of the voting population. The control variables selected to choose participants were age and gender. In terms of gender it was divided almost equally, 51% for men and 49% for women:

Graph 1 Male and female participants



The division regarding year groups was split almost equally amongst all the groups although the 18-25 year old group was slightly larger by 1.25%.

Graph 2 Participants divided by age



Some of the other control variables on which the analysed answers were based were: the place of birth of participants, their social class and their level of education. Regarding the place of birth; 91.3% were born in the area of Aragon where Ayerbe is located, 3.8% in other areas of Aragon and 4% outside Aragon.

As for the social class of the participants; 6.2% belonged to the Middle-Upper class 13.8% belonged to the Middle- Lower class, 8.8% to the Lower class, and the majority of participants placed themselves on the Middle-Middle class, 67.5%.

The level of education of the participants was widely distributed with 2.5% not having completed their primary education, 45% having completed their primary education, 23.8% having completed their secondary education, 8.8% having done a traineeship (FP) and 20% having completed their University education.

1.4. Quality of interviews

A proper methodological design and the quality of the questionnaires are the two main factors to take into account in order to obtain fully reliable data. To ensure quality and reliability interviewers need to be properly trained; I conducted all the interviews and I had already had training and considerable experience in market research interviewing. A significant effort was made to make sure that the 80 interviews, whether they were done in a public place or in private residences were done correctly, striving to achieve maximum validity and consistent data.

2. The socio-political context of the language

The contextual variables analysed in this first section are seen as potentially being able to exert some influence on the opinion and attitudes of people from Ayerbe on the vernacular language. The questions to be analysed in this fragment can be grouped in three sections; they relate to the *devolved model* (Q 11), *Aragonese identity* (Q 12) and *political identity* (Q 13 and 14).

2.1. Demands for autonomical expansion (Q 11)

A little more than a decade after the statute of autonomy was passed, in a nationwide questionnaire by the CIS, Aragonese citizens were questioned as to whether they considered that the experience of autonomous government had benefited Aragon; the region was one of the three in the whole country that held the worst opinion of the decentralisation process¹. Following the 1996 reform, the Aragonese autonomy comprised forty-one areas of competence, the most recent transference from the central government being the health service in early 2001². After almost twenty years of Aragonese autonomy and given the increase of the competences achieved during the intervening period, the attitudes towards the autonomous government and its competences might have changed. The aim when posing this question was to check the existing attitudes in Ayerbe towards self-governed devolved institutions. Those interviewed were asked to take into account

¹ Felix Moral, *Identidad regional y nacionalismo en el estado de las autonomías* (Madrid: CIS, 1998).

² Competencias < www.noticias.juridicas.com > [Accessed 18 November 2009].

their own interests and the interests of Aragon and state if it was necessary to broaden Aragonese autonomy by increasing its competences. The results can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1 Demand for autonomical expansion

	Frequency	Percent
Yes, as soon as possible	35	43.8%
Yes, but not as a matter of urgency	21	26.3%
It depends	14	17.5%
No, we are happy with the current ones	3	3.8%
No, we would have to think about reducing them	0	0%
Does not know	7	8.8%

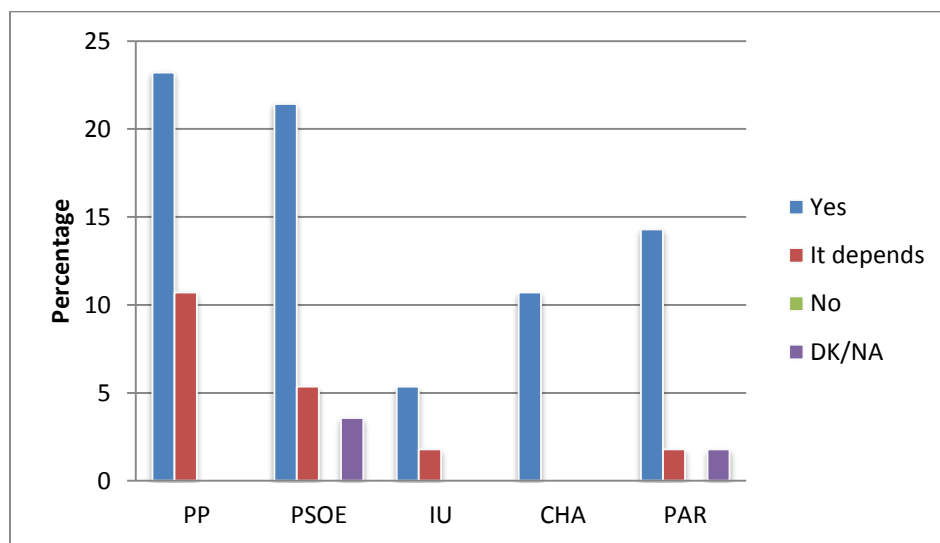
Almost half of those interviewed (43.8%) demand a swift expansion of competences and to those can be added those who demand an expansion of competences but not as a matter of urgency; more than one in four (26.3%). Altogether, more than three quarters of those who expressed an opinion agree with a broadening of the level of self-government in Aragon.

The younger generations are the most satisfied with the existing competences. Whereas among those between 18 and 24, one in three do not want a modification, the older generations are more supportive of an expansion of autonomy (56.4%). Among those who have studied *Formación Profesional* (71.4%) and those who have completed a higher degree (40%) the wish for self-determination is more ingrained, and they would like the autonomical expansion to happen as soon as possible.

As can be seen in Graph 3 showing the correlation of the demand for autonomical expansion with the political party voted, the expected conclusion was reached: that the dissatisfaction with the current level of self-government is often influenced by ideological

concerns. As could be anticipated, those who voted for the regional parties, CHA (100%) or PAR (80%) demand in an indisputable and overwhelming way an increment in competences of devolved government. The rest of the voters for the other political parties do, however, agree significantly on that expansion and more than 60% of the voters of each of the three main political parties are dissatisfied with the level of self-government.

Graph 3 Demand for autonomical expansion based on political party voted



On the whole there is an apparent desire for autonomical expansion among those interviewed, with only 3.8% being satisfied with the existing situation. The reform of the statute of autonomy in the late nineties and the subsequent incorporation of powers by the Aragonese autonomy as championed by the two main Aragonese nationalistic political parties implied a noticeable political change. However a majority of those interviewed (70.1%) are dissatisfied and demand a broadening of the autonomical influence. More regional authority seems to be desired.

2.2. Aragonese identity (Q 12)

In order to determine the national or regional identity feelings of an individual and consequently those of the surrounding community, direct questioning of their subjective identification is often used. Therefore the interviewees were asked to position themselves on a continuum of identification: feeling wholly Spanish at one end of the continuum, compared to feeling wholly Aragonese at the other. The objective was to calibrate the strength of those feelings of Aragonese identity. The answers are displayed in Table 2 and Graph 4.

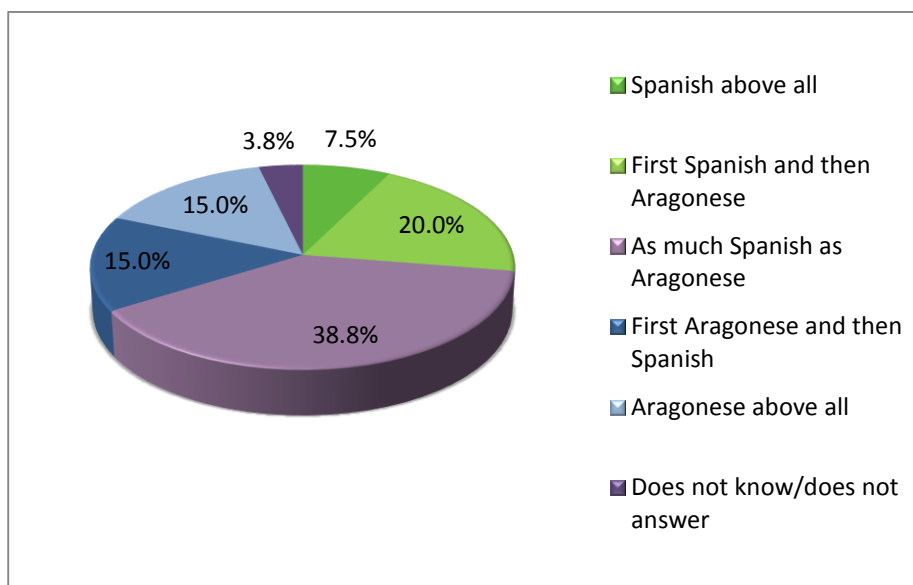
Table 2 Aragonese identification of people from Ayerbe

	Frequency	Percent
Spanish above all	6	7.5%
First Spanish and then Aragonese	16	20.0%
As much Spanish as Aragonese	31	38.8%
First Aragonese and then Spanish	12	15.0%
Aragonese above all	12	15.0%
Doesn't know	3	3.8%

Historically there have been intense regional feelings and a robust regional identity in Aragon. In the late nineties this perspective still could be said to be valid. When asked in a nationwide questionnaire whether they believed that a strong regional identity had always existed in their region, 80% of those interviewed in Aragon agreed. This percentage was only lower than that of people interviewed in Catalonia and the Basque country, which have traditionally been the two regions with a strong stance on nationalistic ideas.³

Graph 4 Aragonese identification

³ Moral, p. 34.



It was noteworthy to find that only 7% of those interviewed thought of themselves as Spanish above all. This result would give an indication of a population with a high regionalistic feeling. However, looking at the other end of the spectrum where only one in six declared themselves more Aragonese than Spanish, it can be observed that the majority declare a compatibility of identities. Most answers revealed a truly shared identity with almost two in five feeling as Spanish as Aragonese and almost three quarters of those interviewed (73.8%) expressing dual identity. In general terms, the regionalistic feelings of people from Ayerbe seem moderately high. These identity feelings are similar to those found in another minority language study with a completely different setting⁴, Manx, where a large part of the participants felt “more Manx than British.”⁵

Since Ayerbe is located in the Alto Aragon area and this is an area known for keeping many Aragonese traditions alive, it was expected that there would be a strong inherent

⁴ Manx died in the seventies and has since been revived.

⁵ Mark Abley, *Spoken Here: Travels among Threatened Languages* (London: Arrow Books, 2005), p. 119.

sense of feeling Aragonese. However, the result was not as high as anticipated, and that is why it was worth comparing it to the feelings in the rest of Aragon⁶ and the rest of Spain to determine its magnitude.

As can be seen in Graph 4, there is a clear difference in terms of Aragonese identification between people from Ayerbe and people from Aragon as a whole. Those from Ayerbe have much stronger feelings about their Aragonese identification; 15% claim to feel Aragonese above all, as opposed to only 1.4% in Aragon as a whole. In general, there is a clearly a strong feeling of belonging to Aragon first and foremost among those interviewed in Ayerbe (30%), compared to 15.8% of those interviewed in Aragon as a whole. However, at the other extreme, the excluding self-identification of feeling Spanish is rather similar in both cases, 7.5% and 4.5%.

Table 3 Aragonese identification of people from Aragon

	Frequency	Percent
Spanish above all	22	4.5%
First Spanish and then Aragonese	25	5.1%
As much Spanish as Aragonese	360	73.2%
First Aragonese and then Spanish	71	14.4%
Aragonese above all	7	1.4%
Doesn't know	7	1.4%

Source: CIS (2002)

The consolidation of Spain as a mainly decentralised country, together with the pluralism of its citizens and the movements of populations, have reduced the percentages of those who express either a Spanish or Aragonese identity, as opposed to a combined Aragonese

⁶ Ayerbe was not included in the Aragonese questionnaire. Personal communication with CIS: 3-12-09.

and Spanish identity. However, it is worth taking into account that these are average values and answers from different regions will vary enormously. Nevertheless, as can be seen in Tables 2, 3 and 4 the most frequent response is for people to feel content identifying themselves as much with their own community as they do with Spain.

Table 4 Self-identification of people from Spain

	Frequency	Percent
Spanish above all	1485	14.2%
First Spanish and then from my autonomous community	893	8.5%
As much Spanish as from my autonomous community	5612	53.6%
First from my autonomous community and then Spanish	1440	13.8%
From my own autonomous community above all	667	6.4%
Doesn't know/ doesn't answer	375	3.5%

Source: CIS (2002)

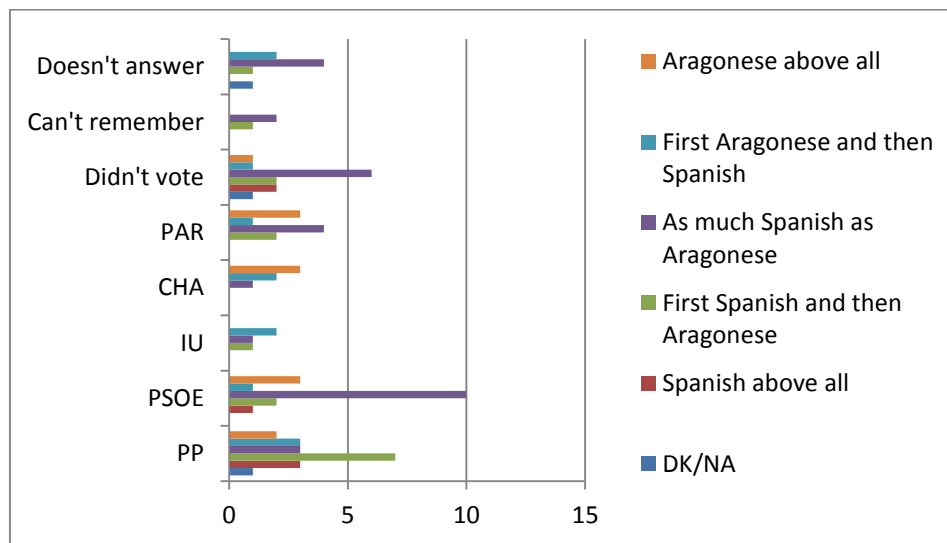
Despite the lack of an overwhelming identification with feeling exclusively Aragonese across all the different sectors in Ayerbe, it is noteworthy that 41.7% of those who were 65 years old or older, had strong feelings about feeling Aragonese, favouring either the 'Aragonese above all' option or the 'feeling more Aragonese than Spanish' option. Conversely, the 46 to 55 year olds felt mostly (46.2%) Spanish above all, or more Spanish than Aragonese. The younger generations felt on average as Spanish as Aragonese.

Those who had studied a degree were the ones with the strongest Aragonese feelings, 60% felt mostly Aragonese above all or more Aragonese than Spanish. There were no major outstanding feelings among all the other categories, the largest part considered themselves as much Spanish as Aragonese.

In order to achieve a more comprehensive picture regarding the feelings of people from Ayerbe towards Aragon or Spain, the results from question twelve were correlated to the age of those interviewed. Out of all those who voiced their predilection to feeling Aragonese above all, the largest numbers came from retired citizens 33.3%. Those who marked the middle option: as much Spanish as Aragonese, were mostly students (58.3%) and retired citizens (28.6%). The only other distinctive figure was that 50% of those who run their own business and had nobody working for them, felt more Spanish than Aragonese, possibly associating the idea of success to the idea of being Spanish. However, no clearer pattern about the age of those who had strong feelings one way or another could be discerned.

There was also no significant difference between the social classes in their regional feelings. In all cases, more than half of those interviewed, regardless of social class, felt mostly Aragonese, either as a dual identity or feeling Aragonese above all: Lower class (57.2%), Middle-Lower (81.8%), Middle-Middle (66.7%) and Middle-Upper (80%).

Graph 5 Aragonese identification and political party voted



As can be seen in Graph 5 when analysing the responses of the voting public, as could be expected, most of those who had voted for the regional parties; CHA(83.3%) and PAR (40%), identified themselves mostly with being Aragonese above all or in any case, first Aragonese and then Spanish. The Spanish nationalist feeling was reliably articulated by the PP voters (62.2%) and those who voted PSOE illustrated a true compatibility of the two identities (58.8%). In addition, regarding the political subjective auto-identification and taking into account that most answers had tended to conglomerate in the middle, the answers related to the political ideology of the electorate were fairly uniform. If we take the centre point to be number five, it showed a mixed response, with 31.2% feeling either as Spanish as Aragonese, or more Spanish than Aragonese, whereas on the same point in the political scale, 33.5% considered themselves Spanish above all. Those who positioned themselves more towards a left ideology, on number three, were perceptibly inclined to feel more Aragonese than Spanish (16.7%) and Aragonese above all (25%).

When those who were born in the Alto Aragon area were asked, their responses did not identify themselves significantly with the Aragonese identity that could have been associated with the Alto Aragonese territory. Slightly more than one in three (35.6%) stated they felt as Spanish as Aragonese, the dominant Aragonese feelings were expressed by 16.4% and no more than 15.1% felt unambiguously Aragonese. However, it is worth noting that 15.1% is a significant percentage when compared to the figure given by Aragon as a whole (1.4%).⁷

The concepts of language and identity have often been associated in other regions in Spain when rationalising linguistic policies⁸. Similarly, it could have been expected that those who felt truly Aragonese would identify Aragonese as the language of the Alto Aragon area. The linguistic reality was somewhat different. Contrary to what was anticipated, there was no correlation between feeling Aragonese above all and believing that Aragonese was the language of the Alto Aragon area, with an agreement of only 18.8%. Whereas people from other regions when defining themselves have emphasised their racial origins or their language, it seems as if the answers to the questionnaires suggest that this may not be the case in Ayerbe. In Aragon as a whole the identifying emphasis seems to be frequently placed on the geographical space and the environment⁹ rather than on the language and Ayerbe seems to follow this stance.

⁷ CIS, (2002)

⁸ Kirsten Süselbeck, “‘Lengua’, ‘nación’ e ‘identidad’ en el discurso de la política lingüística de Cataluña” in *Lengua, Nación e Identidad: La regulación del plurilingüismo en España y América Latina*, ed. by Kirsten Süselbeck, Ulrike Mühlischlegel and Peter Masson (Madrid: Iberoamericana Vervuert, 2008), pp.165-186, (p. 178).

⁹ Mairal Buil, p. 114.

When asking question twelve, regarding Aragonese identity, the intention was to calibrate the strength of the feelings of identification with the Aragonese community. Overall there was no markedly regionalistic nor Spanish nationalistic slant; the majority feeling showed a preference for equality of identity. Nevertheless, dual identity, either leaning towards Aragon or towards Spain was quite widespread, and in Ayerbe the “Aragonese only” view did show a sizeable difference from Aragon as a whole.¹⁰

2.3. Political identity (Q 13-14)

Those interviewed were asked two questions regarding their political identity; one regarding their subjective political beliefs on a left to right scale and the other with a direct questioning of the political party for which they had voted. The outline of their ideological distribution will provide a closing stage of this section on the socio-political contextualisation of the language.

In order to determine their political values, they were asked to place themselves on a political scale of one to ten, depending on whether they thought of themselves more left-wing or right-wing; number one being extreme left and ten being extreme right. The results can be seen in Table 5.

¹⁰ CIS, 2002.

Table 5 Where are you in the political scale? – Ayerbe

	Percent
1	3.8%
2	7.5%
3	20.0%
4	16.3%
5	21.3%
6	7.5%
7	8.8%
8	6.3%
9	2.5%
10	1.3%
Doesn't know	3.8%
Doesn't answer	1.3%

Almost three quarters of those interviewed (72.5%) placed themselves on a value of five or lower, meaning that the majority political view is moderate left. Consequently, the percentages started decreasing abruptly for those who identified themselves with number six or upwards. There was conversely a large amount of interviewees who placed their ideology at number three (20%), an amount comparable to the largest percentage of the table, that of those who positioned themselves at number five (21.3%); this supports the moderate left indication. The average positioning of those interviewed was 4.64 which would correspond to the moderate left with a tendency towards the political centre.

Those who position themselves on the left hand side of the scale, would ordinarily prefer a Federal arrangement for the state. However, were that not possible, they would aim for the closest system, showing a preference for a form of government that was as decentralised as possible. In the Spanish case, that would manifest itself in a tendency towards an autonomous government which would include as much devolution of power as possible.¹¹

¹¹ Moral, p. 81.

As expected, when correlating those in Ayerbe who placed themselves on the left of the political spectrum and those who wanted a swift increment of the powers of the Aragonese autonomous government, 100% of those who placed themselves on number 1, and 66.7% of those who placed themselves on number 2, agreed with a prompt devolution of powers .

Although Aragon already has powers over education policy¹², and in theory that would not have an influence as to whether Aragonese is taught in schools or not, it could be expected that people who want more devolution of power may want the regional government to have more power over its traditions, culture, language and even its legal system¹³.

Political outlook usually has an effect on people's attitudes and would have an influence on the manifestation of their ideas, namely their attitude towards the use of the Aragonese language. People who place themselves towards the left of the scale would be expected to coincide with the positioning of the political parties that promote the use of Aragonese. It would therefore be pertinent to compare the political outlook of people from Ayerbe with that of people from the rest of Aragon and even Spain.

¹² For university education since 1996 and for non-university education since 1999. < www.enciclopedia-aragonesa.com > [Accessed 5 November 2006].

¹³ These are the areas most often linked to Aragonese identity.

Table 6 Where are you in the political scale? – Aragon

	Percent
Left (1-2)	4.7%
(3-4)	23.6%
(5-6)	42.7%
(7-8)	11.6%
Right (9-10)	1.0%
Doesn't know	7.5%
Doesn't answer	8.9%

Source: CIS (2002)

As can be seen in Table 6, there are a number of differences between the answers in Ayerbe and the answers for Aragon as a whole. The percentage of those who place themselves on numbers 1-4 in Ayerbe is considerably larger than those in the rest of Aragon¹⁴. On numbers 1-2 it is 11.3% in Ayerbe versus 4.7% in Aragon. However, the most noticeable difference is on numbers 3-4, with 36.3% in Ayerbe versus 23.6% in Aragon, and above all, on those who place themselves at the centre of the scale - numbers 5-6, where for those interviewed in Ayerbe the proportion is 28.8% and in Aragon it is 42.7%. The rest of the percentages on the scale are relatively similar. The average positioning for those in Aragon is 4.96, which is slightly higher than the average position for Spain.

Table 7 Where are you in the political scale? – Spain

	Percent
Left (1-2)	5.6%
(3-4)	26.9%
(5-6)	33.8%
(7-8)	8.2%
Right (9-10)	1.1%
Doesn't know	14.8%
Doesn't answer	9.6%

Source: CIS (2002)

¹⁴ Ayerbe was not one of the locations included in the CIS (2002) questionnaire.

The results for Ayerbe are closer to the general Spanish tendency (Table 7) than they are to the rest of Aragon. In fact, the average stance in the political scale is relatively similar, 4.68 for Spain against 4.64 in Ayerbe. Traditionally, Aragon has not been seen as a right wing region. Moreover, owing to the left-wing Aragonese forces, by the spring of 1936 a draft for its statute of autonomy had already been passed¹⁵. However, compared to the results for the rest of the regions in Spain¹⁶ it can be noticed that Aragon is on a par with all the highest scoring regions, and therefore veering towards the centre-right position. On the other hand, Ayerbe has traditionally been a left-wing stronghold¹⁷ which has undoubtedly influenced the local policies in most areas¹⁸.

The following question (Q 14) was concerned with political choices, and respondents were asked which political party they had voted for in the last election. PAR and CHA are the two parties which would have represented Aragonese identity the strongest. CHunta Aragonésista has considered Aragonese nationalism as its *raison d'être*, and its basic objective is for this political option to take root among the voters in Aragon. On the other hand, Partido Aragonés' members have not always agreed on the nationalistic slant of their party. Although it changed its name in 1990 to reflect a closer nationalistic approach, it has abandoned at times¹⁹ the political configuration typical of any nationalistic party that would demand political independence with respect to other Spanish political parties, therefore affecting its nationalistic credibility. It currently defines itself as a "partido

¹⁵ Carlos Serrano Lacarra and Rubén Ramos Antón, *El aragonismo en la transición, I: Alternativas aragonesistas y propuestas territoriales (1972-1978)*, (Zaragoza, Rolde, 2002), p.125.

¹⁶ CIS, (2002).

¹⁷ Personal communication with the Mayor of Ayerbe, 22-12-2009.

¹⁸ Francisco José Llera Ramo and Pablo San Martín Antuña, *II Estudio sociolingüístico de Asturias* (Oviedo: Academia de la Llingua Asturiana, 2003), p. 77.

¹⁹ PAR did a pre-election coalition agreement with PP for the General Election in 1996.

aragonesista y de centro”²⁰. Out of the other mainstream political parties, only PSOE and IU would defend the “ley de lenguas”.

This question was asked in order to observe the ideological distribution and consider the effect that votes for the Aragonese nationalistic parties may have in obtaining some linguistic legislation.

Table 8 Who did you vote for in the last General Election? –Ayerbe

	Percentage
PP	23.8%
PSOE	21.2%
IU	5.0%
CHA	7.5%
PAR	12.5%
Didn't vote	16.2%
Can't remember	3.8%
Doesn't answer	10.0%

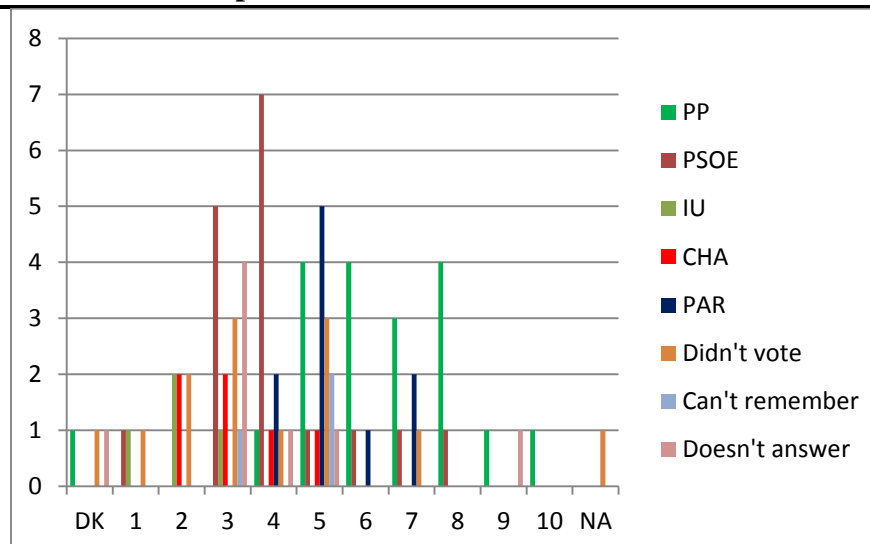
It is worth noting, as can be seen in Table 8, that in Ayerbe the votes for parties other than the two main political options, add up to more votes than the amount obtained by any of the two main parties on their own, showing therefore a voting population with varied political ideologies.

The outcomes do not reflect the voting outcomes of the General Election in March 2000, prior to the questionnaires being carried out. The governing political party in Ayerbe was the PSOE, however, according to those interviewed (Table 8), the political party with the highest percentage of voters would have been the PP. This therefore means that the sample of the population chosen for the questionnaires does not coincide with the percentage of

²⁰ PAR<www.partidoaragones.es> [Accessed 25 March 2010].

the population who cast their votes at the preceding General Election. Moreover, these findings were unexpected. They reflect the different concepts people have of what can be termed right-wing and left-wing, since the answers to the previous question, showed an inclination towards the left, which was clearly not present in the actual votes cast according to the figures provided by those who answered this question. And indeed, it can be seen in Graph 6, how the correlation between the political party voted and the self-placement on the political scale differs. Those who voted for CHA have placed themselves on numbers in the scale that range from number two to number five, the latter ones denoting voters with a political centre ideology. However CHA is identified as a democratic socialist party²¹. Therefore it appears that there are some moderate voters in its ranks. PAR voters would place themselves on numbers 4, 5, 6 & 7 which roughly corresponds with the centre ideology the party defends, if wandering slightly to the right.

Graph 6 Political scale and vote



²¹ Cha Chunta Aragonesista <<http://www.chunta.com>> [accessed 26 June 2010].

Since the beginnings of the democratic process shortly after the end of Franco's dictatorship there have been several political parties in power in Ayerbe, although broadly speaking the tendency has been towards centre or left politics. From 1979 until 1983 The UPD (a communist, socialist and republican party) was in power, subsequently the PAR took charge until 1999²² and the PSOE has been in power since. It is particularly significant that since the beginning of the nineties there has even been a local councillor from CHA²³. This trajectory shows a community that has ventured into non-conventional politics and even dips into the realms of CHA, a party that supports the use of Aragonese language as broadly as possible²⁴.

Table 9 Who did you vote for in the last general election? – Aragon

	Percentage
PP	35.0%
PSOE	22.8%
IU	2.0%
CHA	3.3%
Other party	2.0%
I wasn't old enough to vote	3.7%
Blank vote	2.8%
Didn't vote	15.7%
Can't remember	3.0%
Doesn't answer	9.8%

Source: CIS (2002)

In Aragon, in the General Election in March 2000, the greatest percentage of voters, 47.2% was for the PP²⁵ with the Aragonese nationalistic parties trailing behind considerably²⁶.

²² Roughly during the years when PAR took a more Aragonese nationalistic stance on its politics.

²³ Personal communication with the Mayor of Ayerbe, 22-12-2009.

²⁴ They encouraged the "Aragón ye trilingüe" campaign and they widely maintain the "realidad trilingüe de Aragón Cha Chunta Aragonesista <<http://www.chunta.com>> [accessed 22 June 2010].

²⁵ Elecciones <www.electionresources.org> [Accessed 30 May 2010].

²⁶ CHA obtained 10.42% and PAR 5.38%. Elecciones <www.elecciones.mir.es> [Accessed 30 May 2010]

Although the exact information for PAR was not included on questionnaire 2455 (CIS), the official percentage of voters in Aragon for the Election to Congress was 5.38%; considerably down on the last election when they had presented an individual candidature.²⁷ The diving in and out of the Aragonese nationalistic arena may be to blame when trying to keep a continuous stream of voters for PAR. However, when it comes to showing its attachment to Aragonese identity and nationalism, PAR seems to have shown some affinity towards acting according to the affairs of the moment²⁸. So much so that they use Aragonese (*Rolde Choben*) to name the portal for young people to be involved in the party and yet, they abstained on the “ley the lenguas” vote. It could be due to contradictions like this that have made the number of votes fluctuate so much over the years.²⁹

Table 10 Who did you vote for in the last general election? – Spain

	Percentage
PP	25.9%
PSOE	25.7%
IU	3.7%
CiU	2.6%
PNV	1.2%
BNG	0.5%
CC	0.3%
PA	0.5%
ERC	0.8%
IC-V	0.4%
EA	0.2%
CHA	0.1%
Other party	1.0%

²⁷ In 1993 PAR presented an individual candidature and obtained 144,544 votes which represented 19.0% of the electorate.

²⁸ Mairal Buil, p. 118.

²⁹ PAR obtained 19,0% in 1993, against 5,38% in 2000; 4,68 in 2004 and 5,22% in 2008.

I wasn't old enough to vote	3.8%
Blank vote	2.6%
Didn't vote	16.9%
Can't remember	4.7%
Doesn't answer	9.2%

Source: CIS (2002)

The difference between the percentages of votes for the two main political parties, as can be seen in the previous three tables, was greater in Aragon than it was in Ayerbe or Spain. Moreover, the gap in the votes for the PP and the PSOE in Spain and Ayerbe is rather similar. Regarding the Aragonese nationalistic parties, CHA and PAR, they display a much greater presence in Ayerbe than in the rest of Aragon or, unsurprisingly, Spain.

2.4 Conclusion

In general terms, in the socio-political context in Ayerbe, and after analysing the previous points, it can be said that people from Ayerbe have a considerable desire towards self-government. This willingness is seen in a positive view of the likely effects of the autonomous government during the more than two decades prior to the questionnaires being done, thus generating an overwhelming demand by almost three quarters of those interviewed to increase the current devolution of powers. So much so that nobody agreed with the option of reducing them. This shows therefore a general dissatisfaction across the social and political spectrum with the current limit of devolved powers achieved on the last statutory reform. Politically, although the two main regional parties CHA and PAR would be the ones that champion a complete self-governing region, there was also a uniform tendency from the voters of the other parties towards an expansion of devolved powers.

The compatibility of identities where the majority feel Aragonese and Spanish in various proportions, is one of the characteristics of Aragonese identity. This is equally true of the identity of the people from Ayerbe, where the main feature is an Aragonese feeling of identity, supported by a greater proportion than in the rest of Aragon. As expected, there was a difference amongst the different political sectors: those who voted for the Aragonese regional parties were the ones who showed a greater Aragonese identity. Also worth noting is the main diverging point from Aragon as a whole: the feeling of Aragoneness was much higher in Ayerbe than in the rest of Aragon, so much so that one in six alleged to feel predominantly Aragonese.

In order to determine fully the socio-political context in which the Aragonese linguistic reality functions, it is worth noting that on the political identity front, and as can be glimpsed in the first two questions analysed, there is a majority of people in Ayerbe who would place themselves as centre or left of politics, with more than three quarters of the results being placed on number six or below.

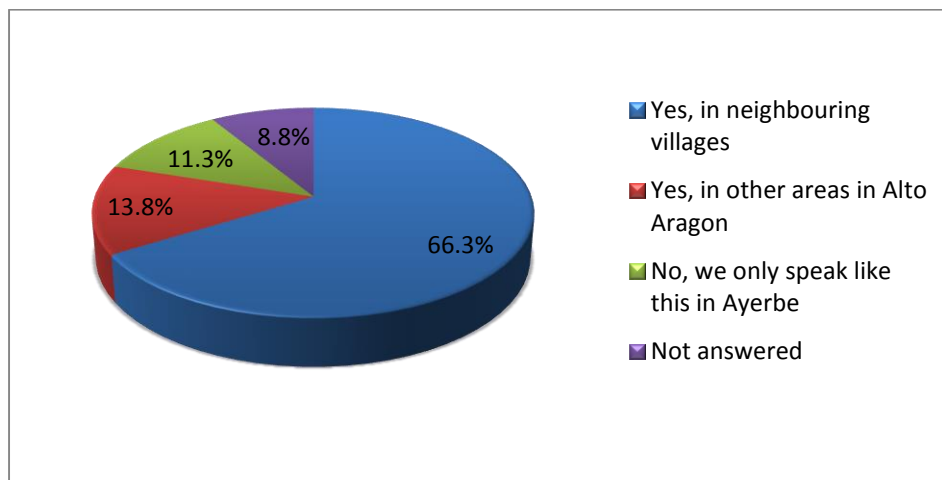
3. Linguistic identity in Ayerbe

After having analysed the socio-political context, the next few sections will deal with the principal objective of this investigation: the sociolinguistic situation in Ayerbe. Firstly, I will examine the *linguistic identity in Ayerbe*, I will continue by analysing the *linguistic competence and use of Aragonese*, followed by the *linguistic habits and perceptions*, *linguistic consumption, normalisation and normativisation of Aragonese*, and conclude with the *linguistic expectations and demands*. The questions to be analysed in this first group can be separated into four sections; they relate to the *identification of own language* (Q 29), *(Alto Aragon) own language* (Q 30) *language association* (Q 31 & 32) and *linguistic identification* (Q 33).

3.1. Identification of own language (Q 29)

In this question, participants were asked whether they believed that people in Ayerbe spoke in a similar or in a quite similar way to other areas in Alto Aragon. This question had two open-ended sections, so that if the answer was affirmative, they could indicate in which villages or areas they spoke similarly. The objective was to assess primarily whether the average resident would associate the way that people spoke in their village with the way people spoke in neighbouring villages or with the way they may have heard people speak in other valleys in Alto Aragon.

Graph 7 Is the language spoken in Ayerbe similar to the language in Alto Aragon?



As can be seen in Graph 7, the majority of those interviewed (66.3%) believed that in Ayerbe, they speak in a similar way to neighbouring villages. Subsequently, the majority of people answered the open-ended question where they were asked to name the neighbouring villages where they spoke in a similar way to Ayerbe. The village mentioned most frequently was Loarre (some 7 Km North East of Ayerbe), followed closely by Murillo (some 10 Km North West), Biscarrués (some 7 Km South) and Agüero (some 14 km North West),¹ although in many conversations after the interviews were over, when telling them that the questionnaire was about the way they speak in Ayerbe, they would comment on how I should have done the questionnaires in Agüero instead and how coarsely they spoke there. This was further reiterated when several participants wrote specifically in the open question that in Agüero they did not speak in the same way as in Ayerbe. This view of Agüero as a village where people speak “badly”² is not only present among Ayerbe’s inhabitants but is also commonplace in the area, so much so that

¹ Fernando Sánchez Pitarch and Guillermo Tomás Faci, ‘Replega de tradición oral agüerana’, *Luenga & Fablas*, 10 (2006), 33-61.

² “Hablar mal” is associated here with the use of the Aragonese language

comments like “en Biel, antes sí que se hablaba tan mal y tan basto como en Fuencalderas, pero no tan mal hablado como en Agüero, esos sí que hablan mal y basto, incluso hoy” have been previously used by informants in other sociolinguistic research³, and yet, these three villages were mentioned by participants in my questionnaire as examples of villages with similar language use to Ayerbe.

It is said of Agüero’s vernacular that “parex estar una eszenzió en iste panorama desolador, y l’aragonés local conserba encara una gran bitalidad y pureza, y o que antes más year un continuum de toz os dialeutos meridionals, se ye combertindo en a isla de l’aragonés de la redolada”⁴ The reason for the different perception of the language used in Agüero is that in Agüero, Aragonese is used as a language used in social interactions inside and outside the house and due to its geographical surroundings its people have historically had less interaction with inhabitants of other villages and the vernacular has been preserved better there. Thus those interviewed were clearly associating the Aragonese language with a coarse or bad way of speaking.

³ Fernando Romanos Hernando, ‘La pervivencia del aragonés en el norte de la provincia de Zaragoza’ in *Autas d’a III trobada de estudios y rechiras arredol d’a luenga aragonesa y a suya literatura* ed. by Francho Nagore Laín, Francho Rodés Orquín, and Chesus Vázquez Obrador, (Huesca: IEA & CFA, 2004), pp. 421-434.

⁴ Sánchez Pitarch and Tomás Faci, p. 34.

Figure 2 Map of Ayerbe and surrounding area



Source: Tomás Buesa

The twenty five neighbouring villages given as examples in the first open question section surrounded Ayerbe from all cardinal points, and in terms of distance they ranged from 3km to over 40km away.⁵ Most of them belonged to the *Plana de Uesca* area like Ayerbe, and in fact several people answered that in Ayerbe they spoke similarly to the rest of the

⁵ Some of these villages have a linguistic monograph written about them, among others: Fernando Romanos Hernando on Bolea.

Plana de Uesca area. However, it is quite significant that some of the villages mentioned were geographically quite distant like Bernués and Anzánigo and not in the same administrative area, but in the Jacetania, an area much further North in Alto Aragon where the use of Aragonese is better established. Some other villages even belonged to a different province⁶, Zaragoza, and their distinctive use of language had already been researched by Fernando Romanos when studying the isoglosses in the North of the Zaragoza province. He was trying to fill the linguistic research gap as the existing isoglosses in the North Eastern area of Aragon between Aragonese and Catalan had previously been studied, but not those in the North Western area of Aragon between Aragonese and Castilian Spanish.⁷ The aforementioned study included villages in the province of Zaragoza that happened to be quite close to Ayerbe geographically and chartered them according to the prevailing language used in them; they ranged from villages like Marracos (some 23 km South of Ayerbe) where Spanish is the prevailing language used, to Murillo (some 10 Km North of Ayerbe) where Aragonese enjoys evident vitality and a high level of use. The villages from the province of Zaragoza mentioned by those who completed my questionnaire in Ayerbe, were according to Romanos, among the very few that maintained the use of the Aragonese language to a greater degree (Murillo, Fuencalderas, Santa Eulalia, Concilio and Ardisa) or lesser (Biel and Puendeluna). His research therefore shows that the people I interviewed in Ayerbe identified their language with that of other villages where there is a range of linguistic differences and similarities.

⁶ Biel, Fuencalderas, Concilio, Santa Eulalia, Ardisa and Puendeluna, although it is worth noting that in terms of distance some villages in the province of Zaragoza are as close to Ayerbe as some others that are in Plana de Uesca itself.

⁷ Romanos Hernando, *Al límite*.

There were a small percentage of participants (11.2%) who assured me that nobody else spoke in the same way as they spoke in Ayerbe, therefore showing a localism conscience and identifying their language with their own sociolect. A similar phenomenon had happened in previous studies, when Alvar enquired in the ALEANAR about the name that participants would give to the language they spoke: “nombre del habla local”⁸ and some of the contributors cited ansotano in Anso, cheso in Hecho, belsetán in Bielsa, chistavín in Gistaín, fragatí in Fraga and atecano in Ateca therefore differentiating their linguistic modality from the rest of Aragon. It could also be that perhaps they were relating to what Manuel Buesa portrayed in the eighties as “ayerbense”⁹:

“La primera sorpresa de un viajero al llegar a Ayerbe [...] es observar cómo la mayoría de sus vecinos todavía conservan rasgos genuinamente pirenaicos [...] poco importa que los hablantes sean personas instruidas, ni los viajes que hayan podido realizar, ni su servicio militar. El ayerbense es habitualmente su habla familiar y como tal la utilizan en la conversación [...] lo mismo un niño que un viejo.”¹⁰

In addition, there was a third group (13.8%) which was certain that the language spoken in Ayerbe was similar to the language spoken in other areas in Alto Aragon. Of those, when correlating their answer to the answers to the question regarding Alto Aragon’s own language, a very high proportion (91%) believed that the linguistic identity of the area should be either monolingual in Aragonese or bilingual, with Aragonese and Spanish both

⁸ Manuel Alvar, *Teoría lingüística de las regiones* (Madrid: Ed. Planeta/Universidad, 1975), p. 94.

⁹ Buesa Oliver, pp. 113-133.

¹⁰ Buesa Oliver, p. 114; He would later on include as speakers of “Ayerbense” the inhabitants of other villages from Ayerbe’s surrounding area, mainly Agüero, Murillo and Loarre.

being the languages used in the Alto Aragon area. This gives way to the idea that these people may have had in mind one Aragonese language with different local variants as opposed to several different languages.

When answering the open ended question where they had to name the other areas in Alto Aragon where they spoke in a similar way to Ayerbe, not all the participants were very forthcoming and the answers showed a diversity of areas in Alto Aragon. Of all the areas mentioned, the most common answers were for those in the same orographical valley like Jacetania (Jaca) or the contiguous Serrablo (Sabiñanigo). Some other less common areas mentioned were a little more distant geographically, in adjacent valleys like Altas Cinco villas, Ansó and Hecho to the West, Huesca and Somontano (Barbastro) to the East and some even said that they spoke in the same way as they do in Zaragoza, therefore associating their language with what they deemed to be standard Spanish. The only comment to the contrary made reference to the furthest Eastern valleys in Aragon, Litera and Ribagorza where they were thought to speak differently as they spoke Catalan.

However, it was found that of those who had earlier on in the questionnaire answered that in Ayerbe there was no other linguistic variety used besides Castilian Spanish, 59% said that in Ayerbe they speak in a similar way to the way they speak in neighbouring villages. There were also 15.4% of participants who agreed that in Ayerbe they spoke in the same way as in other areas in Alto Aragon. These two previous percentages can be notable if they reflect that the participant negates on the one hand that any other linguistic variety is used in Ayerbe, and nonetheless they identify the way they speak in Ayerbe with the way they speak in surrounding villages, or even with the way they speak in other areas in Alto

Aragon. This could show that they may be aware of linguistic isoglosses while contradictorily, their perception may be that they do not pertain to them. Although their answer may also mean, that they think they all speak Castilian Spanish, it is nevertheless more likely that like in other studies of Aragonese, “tratando-se de ro charrar tradicional (...) muitos aragoneses amuestran un zereño complexo diglosico d’inferioridá y escasa conzenzia lingüística que -en o millor de ros casos- no gosa superar l’ambito local d’a bal u redolada”¹¹

3.2. Alto Aragon autochthonous language (Q 30)

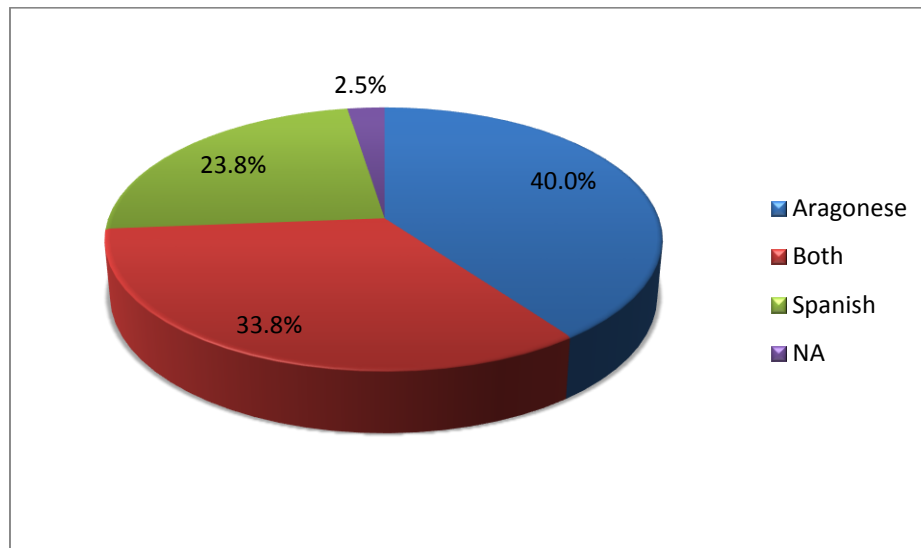
Ten kilometres south of Ayerbe a sign reads: “Welcome to the Alto Aragon area” thus placing Ayerbe firmly in Alto Aragon. Still, even without the sign, there is a general feeling amongst the population that Ayerbe belongs to Alto Aragon. For its inhabitants as well as those of neighbouring villages, Ayerbe tends to be considered as a gateway to the rest of the Pyrenees and even as a point of reference for inhabitants of villages located further south, as a linguistic first step.

In this question participants were asked which language they thought was the “lengua propia” of the Alto Aragon area, and were given the option to choose between Spanish, Aragonese or the bilingual option of both.

¹¹ Migalánchel Martín, Armando Otero, and Migalánchel Pérez, ‘A colección de grabazions de charraros tradicionals y narracions orals: una contrebuzión ta la esbenidera creyazió d’un archivo sonoro d’a esprisió oral en aragonés’ in *Autas d’a I trobada de estudios y rechiras arredol d’a luenga aragonesa y a suya literatura*, ed. by Franchó Nagore Laín, Franchó Rodés Orquín, and Chesus Vázquez Obrador, (Huesca: IEA & CFA, 1999), p. 166.

Mariano García Villas¹² asserted that “la lengua (...) se le considera como un factor psicológico, como traductor del alma del pueblo que la habla, y en ese supremo sentido el aragonés es lengua propia porque corresponde al modo de ser del pueblo que la habla”. This perspective makes this question particularly crucial as it will show the perception, opinion and even the hope of people who live in the Alto Aragon area to be part of the Aragonese speaking community.

Graph 8 Alto Aragon own language



Those who thought that Spanish was “the” language to be used in the Alto Aragon area were a minority (less than 1 in 5 of those interviewed). As opposed to this, almost half considered Aragonese to be that language, and half way between them, just over a third, described the linguistic identity in the Alto Aragon area as bilingual. Therefore it is clear that the majority opted for either only Aragonese or both languages to be used in the Alto

¹² Mariano García Villas cited in Serrano Lacarra, Carlos (1999) *Identidad y diversidad*, p. 200.

Aragon area. Thus, after taking into consideration the negativity of the answers to some other linguistic questions earlier on in the questionnaire, it is significant to find that those who consider Aragonese either in a monolingual way or bilingually as the language to be used in the area comprises more than 7 out of 10 (73.8%).

Those who identified Aragonese as the language of Alto Aragon are greatest among the youngest (43.8%). It would be worth keeping in mind that the youngest generations are the ones who have lived through the more intense public awareness of Aragonese in the last few decades. They have seen the increase of the prestige of this minority language and they are the age group to whom we need to entrust the future of the language. Aragonese was also identified as the autochthonous language in Alto Aragon by a great number of those who had completed their primary education (46.9%), qualified workers and housewives (46.9%), those who identify themselves as belonging to middle-middle class (62.5%) and those who place themselves on the political scale towards the left (81.3%). It appears that the defence of Aragonese as the main language used in Alto Aragon could be linked to a left thinking young middle class participant. Conversely, among those who gave more weight to Spanish were those who were slightly older, 36 to 55 years (52.6%), and predictably, those who had opted for the answer of feeling more Spanish than Aragonese or as Spanish as Aragonese (78.4%). As regards the voting public, of those who had voted for the regionalistic political parties, as could be expected, almost all of them (95%) advocated for an Alto Aragon area where Aragonese would be the language to be used either as the main medium or bilingually together with Spanish. Although the Aragonese language is not always identified with the Aragonese identity, it seems as if the view of Aragonese being the language of Alto Aragon is strongly emotional.

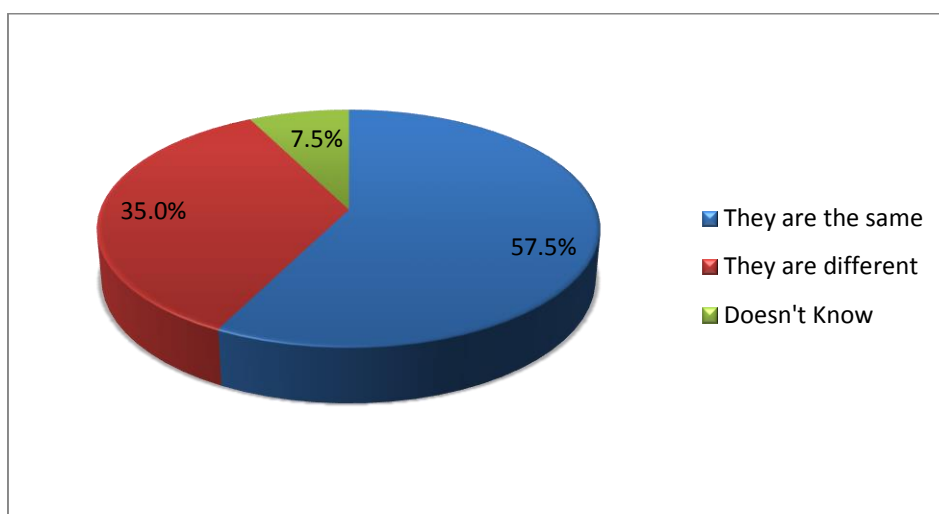
3.3. Aragonese and fabla (Q 31-32)

Fabla is the word which vernacular speakers tend to use when referring to their own language in order to distinguish it from Spanish. It can be heard in places like Ansó, Hecho, Agüero or Panticosa. It means language in Aragonese and it was popularised with the writings of Veremundo Méndez Corasa in *Cheso*. From there, it moved on at the beginning of the seventies to the movement to dignify and defend the Aragonese language. There were then some associations created which included it in their names like: *Consello d'a Fabla Aragonesa*, *Colla Chobenil d'a Fabla* or *Fabla Sur*. In the decade of the nineties the term “lengua aragonesa” or Aragonese started to be preferred as a more precise and educated denomination, since the term *Fabla*, without being accompanied by *aragonesa* could refer to any language, and even together with *aragonesa* it gives exclusivity to the Aragonese romance against other Aragonese languages (used in Aragon) like *Catalán de Aragón* and Spanish. Since there have not been any campaigns regarding terminology, it seems as if it has been a “natural” movement of substitution; something similar to what has happened in Asturias with *Bable* and *Lengua asturiana* or Asturian. They have had similar tribulations with the denomination of their language and Asturians sometimes also use different names for it depending on where the people who are asked come from.¹³ Equally, in the Basque country several terms: *vasco*, *lengua vasca* and *euskera* are heard, unlike what happens in Galicia with *gallego* and in Catalonia with *catalán*. In Aragon, currently both terms coexist, Aragonese is the preferred one and *fabla* tends to be relegated to more colloquial registers.

¹³ Llera Ramo and San Martín Antuña, *II Estudio sociolingüístico de Asturias*, p. 84.

In view of the fact that there is a clear diglossic situation in Alto Aragon, together with some linguistic conflict, it seemed particularly interesting to observe how speakers identified their own register. In order to do that, the wording of the questionnaire was kept as neutral as possible. Only the terms “habla local” and “variedad local” had been used in the questionnaire prior to reaching Question 30 where the terms Aragonese and “fabla aragonesa” were introduced. When reaching Question 31, the objective was to enquire whether the two terms had a separate meaning for those interviewed or not. Therefore participants were asked whether *Fabla* and Aragonese were the same or were two different things. The percentages for the answers to this question can be seen in Graph 9.

Graph 9 Are Aragonese and *Fabla* the same?



For almost six out of ten interviewed (57.5%) Aragonese and *Fabla* meant the same, but there was still some confusion, and 35% still believed that they were not the same thing, as well as 7.5% of participants who preferred not to answer the question, possibly due to lack of knowledge. Those who believed that they were different were equally scattered among

the parameters of age, profession and education, although it emerged that 67% of those who believed they were not the same, had only finished primary school. However, of those who believed them to be the same thing there was a considerable percentage who were under 35 (50%) which means that the young generations have better absorbed the efforts of linguistic or political associations or have been more in contact with the different movements that have adopted the more modern terminology in the different medium (written or in the media).

Those who replied that Aragonese and *Fabla* were two different things, were asked a further open question (Q 32) enquiring about what the differences were, in order to find out the reasons and the discourses that supported their arguments. It is worth remembering that only 35% of those interviewed were asked to answer the open ended question.

There were many diverse answers to the question together with some blank answers and some others who plainly wrote: “I don’t know”, but there was a common theme among some of those interviewed, as they associated *Fabla* to a rough way of speaking or as they said “basto” related to uneducated people as opposed to “fino”: educated. There were comments like: “fabla se habla más en basto, el aragonés [...] de otra forma”. In addition, it was also associated with something that belonged in the past with comments like: “la fabla es muy vieja” or “La fabla la considero el idioma antiguo aragonés”.

This identification of the language with “hablar antiguo” is also found in the ALEANR¹⁴ in other points of Aragon when the participants of the questionnaire for the Atlas were asked to name what they spoke.

There was also another view that exemplified someone who knows the difference between linguistic codes but who does not associate the names with the actual register. The kind of comment used was: “Una cosa es el castellano, otra la fabla”.

It was also clear that some dissociated entirely the word Aragonese with a denomination of a language and associated it rather with the adjective used to indicate origin: “Una cosa es qué idioma hablas y otra de dónde vienes” and “Se puede ser aragonés y no hablar fabla” or rather associating it with the territory: “La fabla es el idioma en general, el aragonés es la lengua de Aragón”.

There was a general confusion as to what Aragonese and *Fabla* were and even some thought there may be three different languages: “El aragonés es más parecido al castellano y la fabla es más cerrada” or “En que la fabla es más diferente al castellano” and even some categorical statements like: “La fabla es un dialecto del aragonés” where Aragonese is a language in its own right, but not so *Fabla*.

Another common answer was the association of *Fabla* and the language spoken in different areas, whether it was associated to the Ayerbe area or whether the Ayerbe area was excluded like: “Según zonas”, “Más de esta zona”, “Se habla en algunas zonas” or

¹⁴ Buesa Oliver, p. 36.

sometimes, a specific area was identified “Fabla en Hecho” (further North West of Ayerbe) and there was even a perception of Ayerbe as a gateway for the difference in the two languages: “Aragonés de Ayerbe para abajo por el acento y de aquí para arriba hay mucha más fabla”.

Contrary to what has happened in other studies like the one in Asturias where a quarter of those interviewed associated *Bable* with something akin to “aragonés común” and criticised it by conferring on it a label of a language “artificial e inventado”¹⁵, there was only one comment that could be associated with that idea among those interviewed in Ayerbe: “Hay demasiada diferencia entre la forma de fabla que enseñan y el de hablar en cada zona” thus delving into some sort of metalinguistic comment.

There was also an association with a difference based on lexical or phonetical aspects and a strong connection of *Fabla* with the oral language: “La fabla es la manera de hablar del aragonés” clearly expressing that the difference lies “En la pronunciación” or “En distintas palabras”.

Some of the participants seemed to use this opportunity of an open answer to share their linguistic perceptions and the comments included were: “Si estas hablando con personas que hablan castellano algunas palabras no nos las comprenden” therefore showing a clear awareness of the difference between linguistic codes. Another participant explained: “Antes cuando hablábamos mal, nos gritaban y decían que teníamos que hablar mejor *estoy chelada* y decía mi tía que tenía que hablar mejor” this remark was made by a

¹⁵ Llera Ramo, p. 60.

female belonging to the age group: 36-45, whereas it would not have been difficult to think that she may have belonged to an older generation. These kind of comments emphasise two issues: that there is awareness of a different code used, albeit one that is seen as an inferior way of speaking linked to uneducated speakers, and the other issue is that it is a sign of a diachronically recent use¹⁶.

These answers are a clear sign of the effects that lack of normalisation has together with the obvious status as a minority language of Aragonese and the linguistic conflict that speakers of this language have experienced and still continue to experience.

3.4 One or several *fablas* (Q 33)

A thorny question in any process of linguistic normalisation surfaces when referring to the local variants of the minority language. These can often illustrate the cultural and social wealth of communities but can also prove to be an important obstacle for the normalisation of a language¹⁷. The standardised Basque language, also known as *euskara batua* ('United Basque'), can be an illustration of how lengthy and difficult a standardisation process can be. As early as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries some remarks had been made about the difficulty brought about by dialectal diversity by some of the first authors to publish in Basque. However, hardly any progress on the

¹⁶ Aragonese may still be in use in Ayerbe, but as the questionnaire did not intend to assess its exact use, and the research was mostly quantitative and not qualitative, this is the only direct reference point that appears spontaneously on the questionnaire.

¹⁷ Llera Ramo, p. 60.

standardisation process was made until the 1960's¹⁸ when Euskaltzaindia the Basque Academy adopted the standardised form based on one of the dialects, the dialect of classical Lapurdian. Basque and Catalan were nevertheless the first peninsular languages to attain normalisation followed by Galician in the early 1980's¹⁹. These processes happened a good deal earlier than the Aragonese progression, with the first real attempt happening in the late eighties.

Some parallels can be drawn between Aragonese and Basque. Leizarraga once wrote: "Everyone knows what difference and diversity there is in the manner of speaking in the Basque Country, almost from house to house"²⁰ and although it would not be plausible to say the same about Aragonese, it is important to recognise that there are some differences in the Aragonese used within the different Pyrenean valleys, and the variety of Aragonese used in the furthest western valleys of Hecho and Ansó has clear differences with the variety of Aragonese used in the furthest eastern valleys in Benasque or Bielsa. Although it is worth remembering as López García wrote that "también son diferentes la variedad de Madrid y la de Buenos Aires sin que eso haya suscitado discusión normativa alguna"²¹. Noticing the diversity in the different valleys, they could be thought to be different languages by some and subsequently this could hinder the recognition and acceptance of the integration of the local variants into a normalised standard Aragonese. Therefore, drawing on the experience of the interviewees, they were asked whether they thought that

¹⁸ José Ignacio Hualde and Koldo Zuazo. 2007. 'The standardisation of the Basque language', *Language Problems and Language Planning*. 31:2, 143-168.

¹⁹ EUROMOSAIC<www.uoc.es/euromosaic> [Accessed 20 August 2010].

²⁰ Leizarraga (1571) in Hualde and Zuazo, p. 3.

²¹ www.efnil.org [Accessed 20 August 2010].

there was a single Alto Aragonese language with local variants or several different languages. The results can be seen in Table 11:

Table 11 Are there one or several Aragonese languages?

	Frequency	Percent
There is only one language in the Alto Aragon area and it comprises local variants	28	35.0%
There are several different languages in the Alto Aragon area	47	58.8%
Does not know	5	6.2%

The results are testimony to the awareness shown by Ayerbe's inhabitants and illustrate a clear division in the answers, with just over one third of participants (35%) believing that all the diversity in the language used in Alto Aragon could be considered only one language with local variants, against almost three in five who support the idea of several different languages. This diversity of opinion reflects the state of affairs that has prevailed in Aragonese society for over a quarter of a century with the two well differentiated groups and their encountered opinions defending or negating the status of Aragonese as a language. On the one hand the passionate supporters of the Aragonese language who publish their work in Aragonese and who defend that grammars, orthography, dictionaries, literature and teaching of Aragonese are needed for the survival of the Alto Aragon "hablas". On the other hand are the detractors, some of whom are linked to the University of Zaragoza, who support that since it is not "aragonés común" but the individual "hablas" which have native speakers, by consolidating the former, the latter will be damaged²². Both groups strangely seem to aim equally to achieve the survival of the Alto Aragon

²² Ángel López García-Molins, 'El aragonés como lengua anisocéntrica' in *De moneda nunca usada: Estudios dedicados a José María Enguita Utrilla*, ed. by Rosa María Castañer Martín and Vicente Lagüpens Gracia (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 2010), pp. 373- 383.

“hablas” either as a contributor to the Aragonese language or as a language in itself. Palpably Aragonese is one of the examples of minority languages evoked by Trudgill which face a delicate problem in that some in the nation-state in which they find themselves deny that their language is actually a language. However, since it is well known that “the concept of a language is in many cases as much a political, cultural and historical concept as it is a linguistic concept”²³ and consequently being perceived as a language may be related to other factors apart from the purely linguistic characteristics, the view of there being only one language in the Alto Aragon with different local variants needs to be maintained. Having said that, it also needs to be taken into account, however ironic it may seem that the very process of selection and standardisation is often a factor leading to the loss of some of the diversity it was designed to safeguard.²⁴

When analysing the data closely, of those who said that there was only one language, more than half (53.6%) belonged to the 18-35 year groups whereas almost three quarters of those who were over 36 believed that there were several languages. Regarding the level of schooling, just over half of those who had completed no more than primary school were in favour of the several languages option along with those who had studied further than completing primary school of whom 53% thought that there was only one language in Alto Aragon. As regards schooling and age, it can be seen that there is not a predominant clear factor in either answer. However, when it comes to social class, those who belonged to lower class thought that there were several languages, although this was expressed to the highest degree by 71.4% of those who belonged to middle-middle class. Due to the

²³ Trudgill, *Sociolinguistic Variation and Change*, p. 114.

²⁴ David Crystal, *Language Death*, p. 140.

social and political interference that this issue seems to hold, it was worth correlating the answers to this question with the political party voted. Out of those who voted for the main political parties, almost four out of ten defended the single language option against the almost six out of ten who thought the opposite. The most notable finding was that those who had voted for the nationalistic parties were equally divided and most significantly, even CHA voters who would normally show their linguistic identity by leaning towards the one language option, did not show a clear inclination one way or another, in contrast with what has been found for other politicised areas.

3.5 Conclusion

As regards linguistic identity, most people in Ayerbe identify their own register with that of neighbouring villages; however some are careful to detach themselves from some villages and not to be identified with those who “speak worse” or in other words those who use a higher amount of Aragonese constructions than they do. It is clear that most of their perceptions of the Aragonese language is that it is what other people speak and something they do not want to be associated with. However it is clearly contrastive to discover that in the eagerness to distance themselves there is a glimpse of reality when perceiving that although when denying the existence of any linguistic varieties other than Spanish, there was a sizeable association of the way they speak in Ayerbe to the way they speak in surrounding villages including those who speak Aragonese more extensively. This visibly shows a lack of consensus that demonstrates the lack of normalisation.

Regarding the autochthonous language of Alto Aragon, as many as eight out of ten considered Aragonese either monolingually or bilingually the language to be used in the area. Therefore those who believe that Spanish is the only language that should be used in Alto Aragon are a minority. This data identifies unequivocally the existence of an aspiring bilingual community, even if the consensus was not an all-embracing majority.

On the other hand, there is a clear majority of two thirds who supports an identification between the terms which are normally used, Aragonese and Fabla. The discourse hidden behind the thirty five per cent who deny this equivalence could be that of fragmentation of the Aragonese language spoken in different valleys, although among those interviewed and when asked about the difference between the two terms the explanations of those who replied to this question did not quite follow that thread.

This leads to a very complex issue, that of linguistic normalisation: the recognition and fitting of the different local variables. In this sense, the results clearly illustrate again a typical situation of lack of normalisation, when almost three in five considered that there are different Aragonese languages against almost two fifths who believed that there was one language, controversially opposed to a unitary linguistic conscience of associating the language used in Ayerbe to that of most neighbouring villages and some further North within Alto Aragon. It is quite significant that the answer to this question was not as politicised as expected, being this the case, it would make a potential recuperation process easier. However, any potential normalisation process would have to take into account that there is a manifest sensitivity towards the dialectal diversity of Aragonese and different variables should be integrated to avoid a possible risk of linguistic exclusion.

4. Linguistic competence and use of Aragonese

In this section the linguistic use and competence of Aragonese is analysed. These items will reveal the true existence of the Aragonese language in Ayerbe. The questions to be analysed in this fragment can be grouped in two sections; they relate to the *linguistic variety use* (question 15) and *linguistic competence* (questions 16, 17, 18 and 19), be it understanding, reading, listening or speaking.

The social unity of the analysis, that is, the linguistic community, does not imply according to Rotaetxe¹ either the existence of a homogeneous code or the homogeneous application of the linguistic code or codes by all members of that community. That is very clear in Ayerbe. That considered, and taking into account Bolaño's² definition of linguistic variety as "la selección de un conjunto de componentes lingüísticos individuales con una distribución social similar"³, the expression "linguistic variety" provides a neutral term, free from value implications, which can be used with validity in the context of Ayerbe. This term was applied throughout the questionnaire to define the Aragonese spoken in Ayerbe.

This chapter deals with a crucial issue, that is, the vitality of Aragonese language usage in Ayerbe. Although its presence was stronger in the past, there are numerous difficulties that may have hindered its continuity as has happened with other minority languages, among them: demographic regression, disappearance of adult speakers or older generations of

¹ Karmele Rotaetxe, *Sociolingüística* (Madrid: Síntesis, 1988).

² Sara Bolaño, *Introducción a la teoría y práctica de la sociolingüística* (Méjico: Trillas, 1982), p. 126.

³ Differences established by linguistic components (grammatical, phonological or lexical) are taken into account, but the most important concern is the diverse social functioning.

truly fluent speakers together with a consolidation of institutions that only use Spanish as a communication language⁴. Following an enquiry into the presence of Aragonese in Ayerbe, the knowledge level of those interviewed is analysed, based on a subjective evaluation that they make, auto-judging their linguistic aptitudes such as understanding it, speaking it, being able to read it or being able to write in it.

4. 1. Linguistic varieties used in Ayerbe

In diglossic situations and where there is a marked minorisation of one of the existent linguistic varieties, it is essential to begin by finding out not only the knowledge or even the identification that the actual speakers make of their own variety but the very existence of a conscience by those speakers on the existence of a variety, different to the dominant language. The borders between the different Romance languages are not always clearly distinguished, unlike those between Euskera and Castilian Spanish. It is the same with languages like Galician, Asturian or other Romance languages and Castilian. It can even occur that speakers of vernacular languages do not identify their own register as something different, considering it simply a rural way of speaking or an incorrect version of the dominant standard language, as happens quite commonly in Aragon.

One of the most important issues in this questionnaire was precisely that, to ascertain whether there was awareness of the use of Aragonese in Ayerbe. Taking into account that the interviewer had heard some of those interviewed interact in Aragonese after having negated its presence in Ayerbe, and as the family environment is the main setting for

⁴ Llera Ramo and San Martín Antuña, *II Estudio sociolingüístico de Asturias*, p 29.

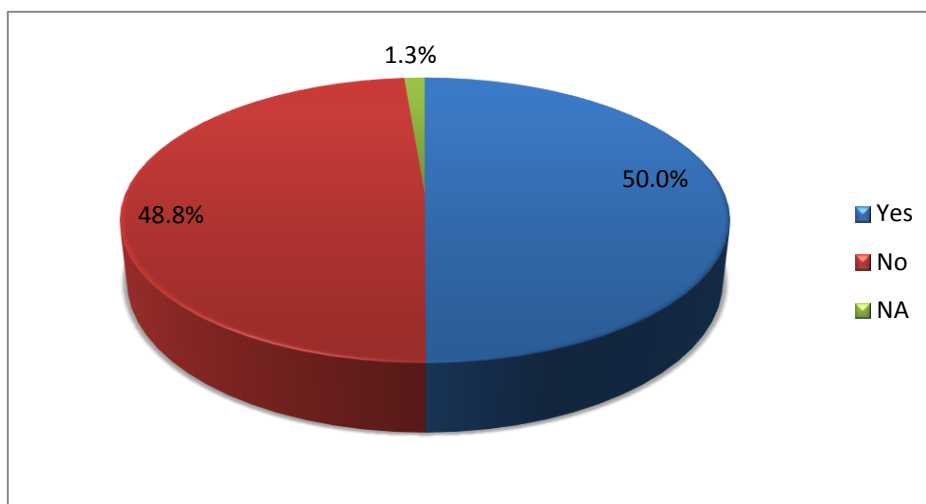
interactions to take place in a minority language, especially if the language, like Aragonese, does not carry enough institutional support, this question (Q 15) was posed in order to provide a more specific representation of the perceived linguistic situation in Ayerbe.

It was the concept of linguistic variety that was chosen to show the perception of the regression phenomenon of Aragonese as opposed to a term that may cause misunderstandings like Aragonese or Fabla. Hence, the interviewees were questioned about the existence in Ayerbe of another linguistic variety besides Castilian Spanish. The answers show a clear division that is almost split equally down the middle, 50% of those interviewed confirmed the existence of another variety against 48.8% who contradicted them; although it is worth pointing out that when writing the answer, many of those interviewed who had opted for the negative reply, did so while uttering sentences along the lines of: “there are only few people who speak it, so truly the answer is no”. This kind of comment suggests a negation of the obvious; there is another linguistic variety in Ayerbe, but it is used little, at least in public. Taking into account the social forces which often dictate language use, it seems as if Aragonese, being the low or socially less valued variety according to its diglossic situation with Spanish, is reserved for more private domains.⁵ The speakers of Aragonese are not always characterised as diglossic, but their behaviour is. It is then their beliefs and attitudes about the language that will certainly condition the maintenance of diglossia and the transmission of the language as a fact of

⁵ Daoust, p. 437.

linguistic culture.⁶ As can be seen in Graph 10, the opinions are divided into two opposing halves.

Graph 10 Is there another linguistic variety in Ayerbe?



With the aim of checking that there was a balance regarding the answers, as there was a strong possibility that the answers provided by older people would differ vastly from those provided by the younger ones, the age distribution was taken into account. The answers were divided into groups depending on age and it can be observed in Table 12 that the answers, although they are quite heterogeneous, appear to lean towards the suspected original hypothesis. Two thirds of those aged 18-25 stated that there was not another linguistic variety, whereas the answer of those in the 46-55 age bracket was diametrically opposed, with almost three quarters agreeing on the affirmative answer. The reason for this high percentage may be linked to the awareness stemmed from the language

⁶ Joshua Fishman, 'Language and Ethnicity: the View from Within' in *The Handbook of Sociolinguistics* ed. by Florian Coulmas (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).

recognition movements in the seventies which they may have come across during their formative years. It was surprising to find that the two senior age groups did not seem to agree with the affirmative premise of the question, since traditionally, it is amongst those from the older generations that the language has been more widely used. However, they are also the groups most influenced by an education system and a society that would have tried to eliminate the use of any linguistic variable other than Castilian Spanish. Or else they may have even answered negatively after comparing the present with their knowledge of past usage.

Table 12 Is there another linguistic variety in Ayerbe?

Age	Yes	No	No Answer
18-25	33.3%	66.7%	0%
26-35	57.1%	35.7%	7.1%
36-45	42.9%	57.1%	0%
46-55	69.2%	30.8%	0%
56-65	50.0%	50.0%	0%
+65	50.0%	50.0%	0%

Those who had answered affirmatively to the existence of another linguistic variety could have been said to agree with the concept of language unity since 72.5% of them had also answered that in Ayerbe they speak like in neighbouring villages. However, their opinions were not uniform enough to make an indisputable assumption since there was only a small difference as regards the language status awarded to Aragonese. Of those who had said that there was only one Alto Aragonese language with local variants 53.6% had also agreed on the existence of another linguistic variety in Ayerbe, against those who had denied Aragonese its language status, stating that there were several Alto Aragonese languages and 46.4% of them also believed that there was not another linguistic variety in Ayerbe.

In order to check whether there could be an influence on the use of the vernacular language if parents did not come from the area, a correlation was done with question four, where participants were asked about the precedence of their progeny. For the largest percentage (37.5%) of those who had answered yes, both parents were from Ayerbe, a similar amount to the largest percentage of those who had answered no, for 30.8% of them both parents were from Ayerbe. There did not seem to be any substantial difference either among those for whom only the mother was from Ayerbe or those for whom only the father was from Ayerbe, as could have been anticipated due to the generally more extensive maternal contact with a child. However, it may have been the case that some spouses may have originated in neighbouring villages where there would not be that much difference in their language.

Also worth considering, was the effect that a spouse who does not originate from the same area where the vernacular language is used, can have on the awareness of the use or presence of that vernacular language. Out of all those interviewed, 27.5% were, had been married or had a partner who did not come from Ayerbe. The results however are not enlightening as there does not seem to be any outstanding evidence of influence. Of those whose partner came from further afield, 45.4% claimed that there was not any other linguistic variety in Ayerbe, whereas a somewhat higher percentage, 54.6% said that there was.

Although Chaime Marcuello⁷ claims that “la identidad aragonesa está en decadencia” the data from question twelve does not totally reflect that. Moreover, when correlating Aragonese identity with the recognition of another linguistic variety in Ayerbe, the results are rather revealing, as 20% of those who recognise the presence of Aragonese in Ayerbe claim to feel “Aragonese above all”, which apart from the highest percentage (as in question twelve) of 42.5% belonging to those who feel as much Spanish as Aragonese, it is the second highest percentage. This could almost be regarded as confirmation of the existence of a linguistic identity. Despite the fact that language has not always been used for identity purposes in Aragon.

Social class and sometimes education, often have an influence in the perception that population can have on this issue. The higher the social status of the person interviewed, fewer are the possibilities of recognising the existence of a vernacular linguistic register. However, that does not seem to have been the case in Ayerbe. After considering the possible discrepancies in their answers regarding the level of education of those interviewed, no considerable differences were found, the affirmative answer was expressed by 50% of those who had completed their primary education, against 41% of those, who answered negatively. At University level education, the difference was equally small with 12.5% who had said yes and 25.7% who negated it. Thus contrary to the possibility of a higher percentage in use due to an increase in the level of schooling and a possible repercussion on an evolution of the social structure and its influence in the communicative processes. Neither was there a substantial difference as regards social class in most brackets, apart from the fact that the presumption seemed to be inverted in the

⁷ Chaime Marcuello, p. 20.

upper levels; of those belonging to the Upper classes, 80% replied affirmatively against 20% negatively. However, it is worth taking into consideration what a speaker of Aragonese from Ayerbe published in 2007: “Después de muchos años, yo he seguido queriendo mantener (...) aquellas raíces idiomáticas que brotaban de los labios de mi abuela, de mis tíos y de cuantas personas mayores me permitía escuchar por la calle, pese que a mi profesor no le gustase”⁸. It is clear from this fragment that Aragonese in Ayerbe used to be much more common than it is nowadays.

4.2 Linguistic competence

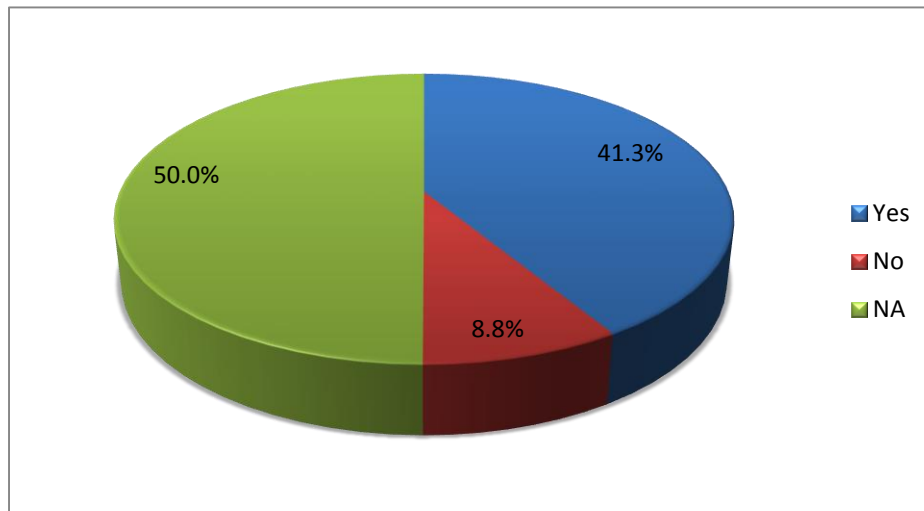
The next four questions were only asked to those who had replied affirmatively to the previous question (Q 15), which was exactly 50% of those interviewed. They were questioned further about their knowledge of Aragonese in Questions 16-19, whereas those who had denied the existence of another language variety in Ayerbe did not have to provide any information about their potential knowledge. Despite the fact that they may well have used or been able to understand Aragonese subconsciously.

In the first question (Q 16) they were asked whether they understood this other linguistic variety. Of those that had to reply to this question, as many as 82.6% declared that they understood it against a meagre 17.4% who did not. However, it has to be noted here that the proportion of those who affirm that they understand Aragonese was likely to be high, due to the closeness of Aragonese to the main Romance language used in Spain; Castilian Spanish. It is imperative to take into account that Ayerbe is a village where the Aragonese

⁸ Luis Pérez Gella, ‘Ganarás o pan con o sudor de tu frente’, *Luenga & Fablas*, 11, (2007), 207-12.

language is often seen in the written form. The frequency of this contact with the language as well as any oral interactions that may take place in their daily lives would have helped people to be aware of their understanding of the language as can be seen in Graph 11.

Graph 11 Do you understand it?



When correlating those who claimed to understand it with the age of those interviewed, there was no one over the age of sixty five who did not understand it, a sign that Aragonese used to be more frequent in the past. Conversely, only three in five of those aged 18-25 understood it indicating that it is being lost through the generations. Concerning education, all of those who had completed University education claimed to understand it. The highest proportion of those who alleged not to understand it with just over a quarter (27.2%) was those who had completed their secondary education. This may have been linked to those belonging to the 18-25 age group. When comparing it to social class, those who belonged to the higher classes understood it, probably linked to some of those with University education; whereas the highest percentage of those who did not

understand it belonged to the middle to low social class. Equally, one in two of those with an income of more than 2,400€ pcm claimed to understand Aragonese and what's more, absolutely everybody whose income was between 1,200€ and 2,400€ answered affirmatively as well. These positive stances by the upper social classes and those on the higher levels of education, could lead to an increase in the use of Aragonese by these two social groups, which is generally unusual for minority languages sociolinguistic contexts.⁹

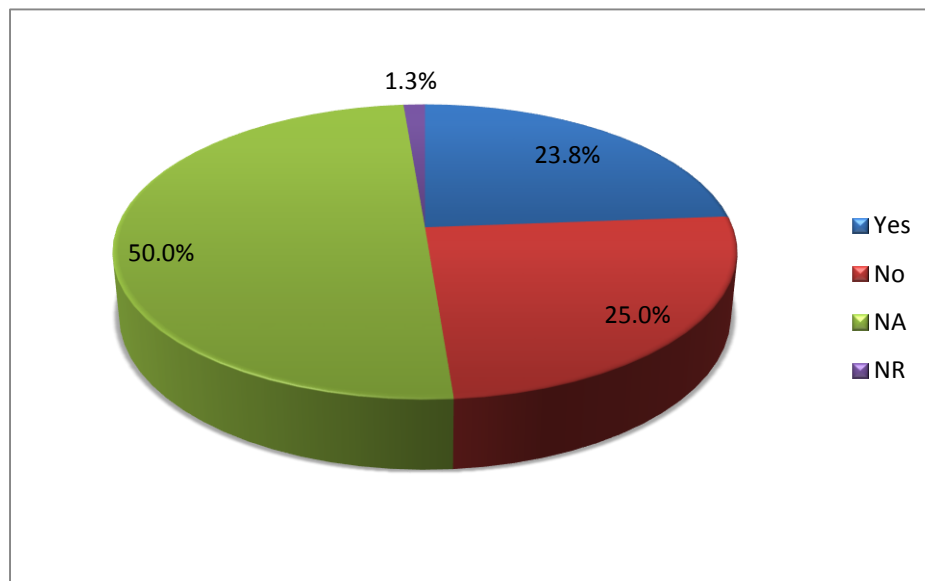
Later on in the questionnaire the participants were asked whether they knew of any popular tradition in which the Aragonese language was used. When comparing their answers to that question with whether they were able to understand the language, the theory was that they would be closely correlated. However, the percentages were not as consistent as previously thought, with 71.4% of those who negated both options, against 54.5% who confirmed they understood Aragonese and thought there were some popular traditions in which Aragonese was used, showing a manifest lack of awareness.

In the next question (Q 17) they were asked whether they could speak that other linguistic variety, and as far as their ability to speak Aragonese is concerned, the results were distributed almost equally. As can be seen in Graph 12, no more than 47.6% of those asked to respond claimed to be able to speak it against 50% who could not. These results show a considerable decrease in the total percentage with regards to their understanding of the language. The main reason may be that, as with most languages, it is easier to understand it than to speak it. However, this diminished quantity, will no doubt include the

⁹ Bernadette O'Rourke, 'Conflicting values in contemporary Galicia: Attitudes to "O Galego" since Autonomy', *International Journal of Iberian Studies*, 16 (1), (2003), 33-48.

lack of practice to which those who interact outside the home mostly in Castilian Spanish are subjected. This tends to be a characteristic of minority languages whose redoubt is often limited to the home environment and especially so of Aragonese.

Graph 12 Do you know how to speak it?



The highest percentage of those who confirmed they could speak it, 73.7% belonged to the middle-middle class whereas the upper classes were divided exactly in half, with 50% who claimed to be able to speak it and 50% who could not, drastically opposing the answer to the previous question, where 100% of that social class were able to understand it. Nonetheless, for the lower middle class the outcome was similar to the answers to question 16, with one in four claiming to be able to speak it. Conversely, all of those whose income was superior to 2,400€ claimed not to speak it. This figure would confuse matters regarding social class and income, were it not for the fact that many people in Ayerbe own large amounts of land and therefore consider themselves upper class although their monthly income may not be too high. With regards to education, the answers again

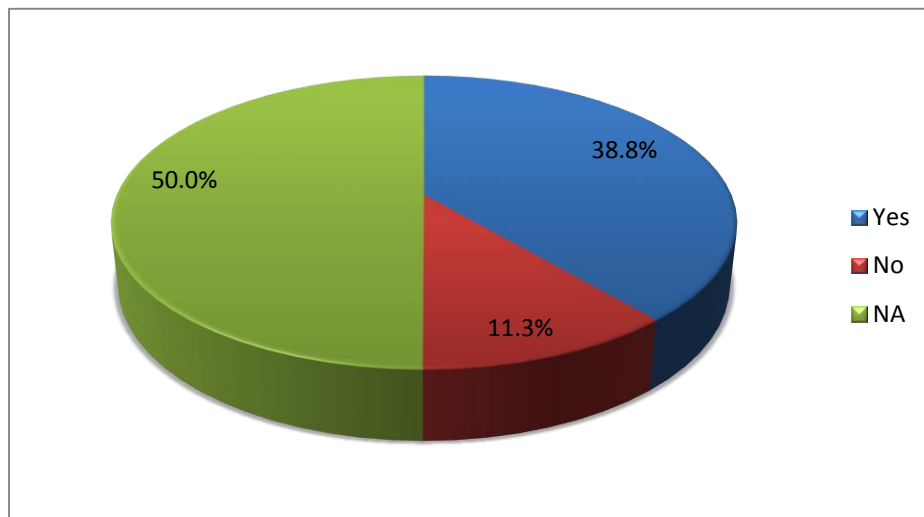
moved away from the previous question, with the highest percentage of those who claimed to be able to speak it, 63.6% having finished their primary education (which used to mean studying until the age of 15 and nowadays is 16). As many as 40% of those who maintained not to understand it had completed their secondary education; again, similar to the response to the previous question. As for the age of those who claimed to be able to speak it, everybody from age 46 upwards stated they could, and those who did not, belonged mostly to the 18-35 year groups, confirming again the generation gap.

The following question, (Q 18) asked participants whether they could read Aragonese and despite a definite absence of a method of instruction, as can be seen in Graph 13, it is remarkable to observe the results to this question about their reading ability: 77.6% of those asked the question declared that they could read Aragonese, while only 22.4% replied negatively. The process of authority generated by the main language tends to be more pronounced at reading level as opposed to oral expression due mostly to the lack of literacy and the low status of the minority language which as a rule tends to be associated much more to informal use rather than formal use. This is the current situation in which Aragonese survives nowadays. However, the figures above show that this reasoning does not seem to apply to Aragonese in Ayerbe.

The lack of correspondence with this reasoning and the data found in Ayerbe is without doubt due to the regular presence of texts written in Aragonese found in the locality. There are at least two regular publications in Ayerbe that print assiduously at least one and often more pages written in Aragonese; the programme for their festivals and the magazine APIAC, although frequently there are often announcements written in Aragonese on some

of the boards provided by the Village Hall and in public places as well as frequent sections on programmes of events.

Graph 13 Do you know how to read it?



Out of those who acknowledged that they could read Aragonese, as many as 54.8% had finished their primary education, but the real difference was made by those who had finished their University studies, since the totality of those stated that they could read Aragonese. When correlating age with the affirmative responses, the largest group who claimed not to be able to read Aragonese were those belonging to the 18-25 year group, with 3 out of 5 not being able to read it. On the other hand, those on the older age range were the ones with the most capability; since only 16% of those between 56 and 65 could not read it and every single one of those over 65 were able to do it. The higher the age, the higher was the ability.

As regards the social class, it was half and half for the upper class and the amount of those who could read it increased parallel with a decrease of the social class, thus there were 71% of those who belonged to the middle-middle class who could read it and the totality

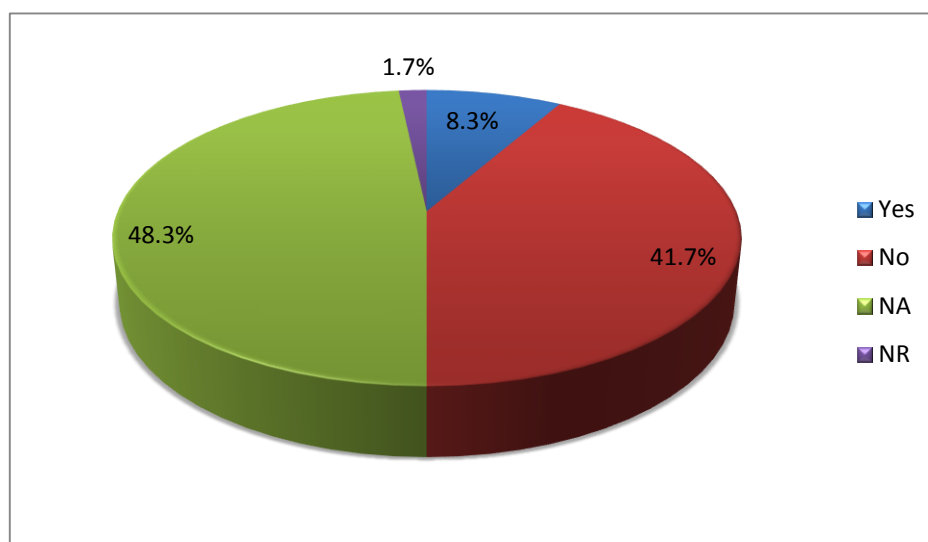
of those belonging to the lower class could do it; it was in this case, the lower the social class, the higher the ability. Closely linked to the social class results were those based on the income of the ones who claimed to be able to read it, with half of those whose income is over 2,400€ answering yes, as well as the entire bracket of those whose income was between 1,200€ and 2,400€.

It is worth noting that over 90%, of those who replied yes to this question had been born in this area of Aragon, accordingly showing the influence that living and being brought up in Ayerbe can have on one's ability to read Aragonese.

In Question 19 the participants were asked whether they could write in Aragonese and if they answered yes they were further asked what exactly did they write in Aragonese. They were given four options: personal letters, notes (announcements, messages), literary work or any other type of writing. As can be seen in Graph 14 there were not many who could write it, only 17.6% answered yes against a considerable 82.4% who could not. Of those who replied yes, 14.2% used it to write personal letters, 28.5% used it to write literary work, and the vast majority, 85.1% used it to write notes, either for themselves or for other people to see. Only two in seven used a combination of more than one option. This shows that when making use of Aragonese in the written form, as would be expected, it is used mostly in informal situations, and rarely as a means of formally addressing a wider audience. That use has until now and very often by law, been reserved for Castilian Spanish.

When referring to attitudes about literacy, Schiffman states that “cultures with oral traditions may have less or no respect for writing”.¹⁰ This may well be the case in Aragonese which has a much greater tradition of oral interactions and little written tradition, as can be corroborated by the situation in Ayerbe. However, respect may not be the only issue, as this data, together with the low percentages obtained when initially asking exclusively about their writing ability in Aragonese shows. They can be recognised as a lack of literacy on the part of the speakers, and they point towards the clear absence of a method of instruction in the vernacular language. This could have a deeper effect in the revival of Aragonese as it means that it does not fulfil one of the main requirements according to Crystal for the survival of a language: “An endangered language will progress if its speakers can write their language down”.¹¹ This needs to be addressed for Aragonese in order to guarantee the language’s progress.

Graph 14 Do you know how to write it?



¹⁰ Schiffman, p. 10.

¹¹ Crystal, *Language Death*, p. 138.

The age of those who could write in Aragonese was distributed evenly amongst all the age groups, the highest were both 26-35 and 46-55 with 28.6%. Equally small was the difference regarding the place of birth between those who answered yes and those who answered no, they unmistakably reflected the place of birth of all those interviewed: Ayerbe and surrounding villages. The disproportion in these figures did not seem to be sufficiently outstanding to make any assumptions. Most of the participants who could write in Aragonese (71.4%) had finished their primary education, and some have finished their secondary education (28.6%), but none had completed any University studies. They all belonged to the bracket middle-middle class and the income for all of them was equally divided between 600€ and 1,200€ or between 1,200€ and 2,400€. Those who stated they could not write in Aragonese were evenly distributed among the other class and income brackets. It is clear by looking at this data that those who have learned to write in Aragonese do not associate being able to do it with economic prosperity neither with a high level of education.

For many locations with minority languages, the use of the two languages, the main one and the minority one, can be associated with two different perspectives of the world. This model is often found in other social diglossic situations. Aragonese in Ayerbe is also restricted to certain uses: it tends to be allocated to festivals, used in the house or it is associated with simple events; while Castilian Spanish is used for functional purposes and if based on the data above, seems to be synonymous with prosperity¹².

¹² Glaser, *Essentialism and relativism in Gaelic and Sorbian Language Revival*, p 16.

4.3 Conclusion

The results seen so far present a situation of bilingualism, characterised by diglossia and lack of normalisation in which there is no general sociocultural consensus on questions as basic as the very existence of a vernacular linguistic register as only one in two of those interviewed recognised spontaneously the existence of an Aragonese vernacular register in their community. This clearly points to a situation of linguistic extraneousness or alienation which is relatively significant, aside from the fact that there was some level of linguistic unity as the vernacular was chiefly associated with that used in neighbouring villages.

Language and the ability to use it, is a matter of social prestige and it can therefore be understood as something that either aids or hinders social mobility. In a situation like the one found in Alto Aragon and consequently in Ayerbe where languages in contact survive in a situation of conflict and minorisation, this question related to a language social prestige acquires a special meaning. The effect that the majority language can have on Aragonese does seem to yield to a level of linguistic stigma, this was especially candid in Ayerbe since most participants who had completed University studies did not recognise the existence of Aragonese in the locality.

In other minority languages like Galician the most assurance about the language was to be found amongst the social categories that used the language the least: the younger

generations, those with higher levels of education and those from higher social classes.¹³ In the case of Aragonese in Ayerbe, that finding did not truly correspond, since it was the large majority of the Upper classes that acknowledged the presence of Aragonese in Ayerbe and claimed to be able to understand it, in addition to all of those who had completed their University studies and could read Aragonese. Nevertheless the situation is very similar regarding the younger generations, as most of them could not understand it, speak it, read it nor write it. Since these generations would be the ones that would help the language survive through intergenerational transmission in the near future, these results spell a dire state for the Aragonese language in Ayerbe.

However, despite the fact that participants did not associate Aragonese with economic prosperity neither with a high level of education, meaning therefore that it would not be the language of choice in most interactions. However, there is still an extraordinarily high percentage of the population who understand it and can read it which shows that Aragonese still maintains some prestige and visibility within the dominant community of Castilian Spanish.

¹³ O'Rourke, pp. 33-48.

5. Linguistic perception

In the previous chapter participants were asked whether they thought that there was another linguistic variety in use in Ayerbe apart from Castilian Spanish and half of them confirmed its presence. Only those who did reply affirmatively to that question were specifically asked four further questions. In this section, the *linguistic perception, stigma and status* of that variety will be analysed (Q 20-24). Those who had replied negatively were exclusively asked one further question about *the absence of linguistic varieties* (Q 22) and subsequently both continued with the rest of the questions on *perception of Aragonese outside Alto Aragon* (Q 25) and presence of *Aragonese in popular traditions in Ayerbe* (Q 26 & 27).

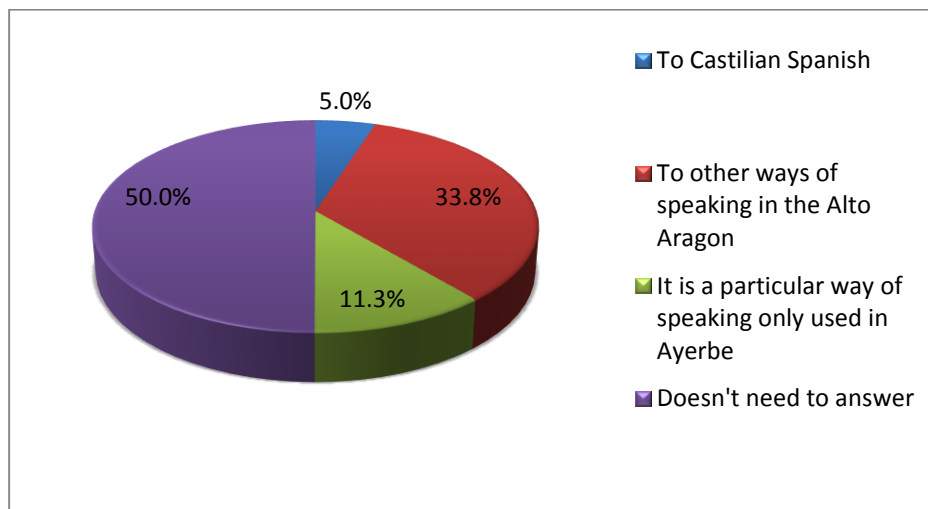
5.1. Perception of the linguistic variety used in Ayerbe (Q 23)

Once the awareness of the existence of a register different to the dominant language was confirmed, there was a need for an identification of that register. The purpose was not to give it a name such as in the ALEANR, nor probe about a possible identification with *Fabla* or Aragonese as was done in question 31 and on certain replies to question 32, but to identify what these participants associated it with linguistically. Those who had confirmed the presence of another linguistic variety in Ayerbe were asked whether they would relate it to Castilian Spanish, to Alto Aragon ways of speaking, to another different variety or whether it was a particular way of speaking only used in Ayerbe.

As can be seen in Graph 15, the majority of those who had to answer this question, almost 7 in 10, identified it with other ways of speaking in the Alto Aragon area. The prevalence of this result was expected to be at least this high and confirms a linguistic awareness that is occasionally present and manifested here by some of the participants. On the contrary, only 22.4% identified it with a particular way of speaking used exclusively in Ayerbe, therefore denying the distinguishing features of a language and failing to associate it even with the vernacular used in neighbouring villages. Although it is worth noting that people from Ayerbe are as a whole incredibly proud of their own vernacular or Ayerbense as it is commonly known, and they may have associated it with what they are told is a vernacular privy to their village. Conversely, only 1 in 10 related this variety to Castilian Spanish and they may have associated it to Castilian, thinking that the other linguistic variety that exists in Ayerbe is closer to Castilian than to Aragonese. None of those questioned chose the fourth option which offered the possibility of associating the linguistic variety used in Ayerbe to 'another' variety.

If this question had been asked to the totality of the participants instead, it is likely that those who had negated the existence of another linguistic variety in Ayerbe, would have associated the way they speak in Ayerbe with Castilian Spanish.

Graph 15 Association of the linguistic variety used in Ayerbe



From the lower age groups (18-45), nobody associated the other linguistic variety used in Ayerbe with Castilian Spanish, in fact those age groups were the ones that associated it mostly with Aragonese with the 56+ age group amounting to only 14.8% and those who belonged to the 65+ age group were the ones who asserted that it was a particular way of speaking only used in Ayerbe most fervently (44.4%). This age group was also the one with the lowest education level and those who traditionally had travelled the least and therefore had less contact with other people from a different village or area who may have used it too. This may well have affected their view when answering this question.

As expected, the totality of those who voted for the regionalist party CHA, possibly through their linguistic awareness linked to the party's distribution of information, chose to associate it with other ways of speaking in the Alto Aragon area, whereas the majority (71.3%) of those who voted for the other regionalist party PAR declared that it was a

particular way of speaking only used in Ayerbe. Aside from those who voted for PAR, all the other party voters associated it mainly to other ways of speaking in Alto Aragon.

When correlating the data with the origin of the parents of those interviewed, all the statistics were almost equally distributed apart from the fact that out of those who had said that it was a particular way of speaking only used in Ayerbe, 55.6% had both parents born in Ayerbe, showing that the concept in some situations may have already had a foundation at home.

The opinions of these participants who recognise the existence of another linguistic variety in Ayerbe are not as it was feared evidence of disorientation and lack of knowledge about their own register as tends to happen to a certain degree to linguistic minorities like in Alto Aragon, they were on the contrary, reasonably aware of the presence of Aragonese.

5.2. Perception of the use of Aragonese (Q 20-22)

Another way of measuring depth of use of Aragonese is to ask those interviewed about their own estimate or impression as regards the quantity of speakers of that local variety in Ayerbe as a whole. It is generally known that the impression that one may have of the opinion of the majority in one's environment grants it a greater or lesser social plausibility. It is a manner of sociological law that could be labelled as "number pressure". This question was posed on Question 20 and participants could choose between three different options to answer it according to their opinion and experience: few speak it, quite a lot of people speak it or almost everybody speaks it. The results can be seen in Graph 16.

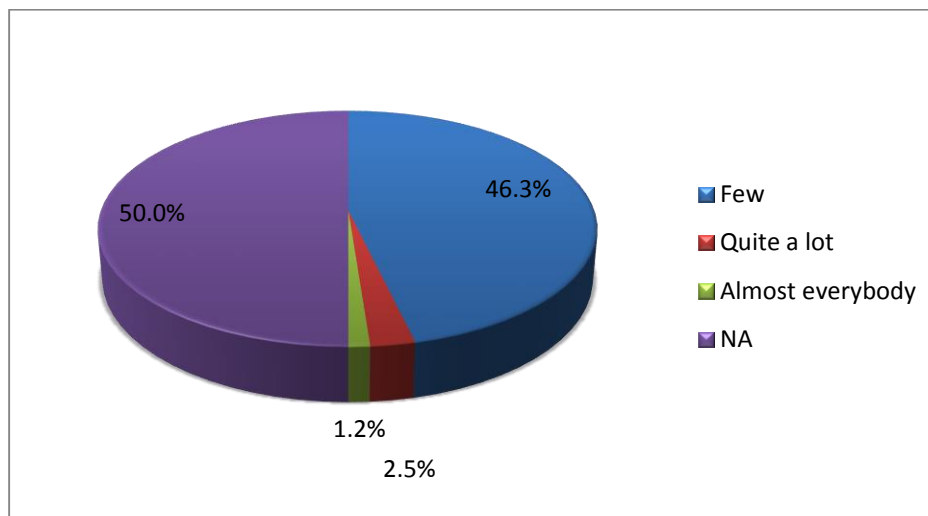
The estimates of the use of Aragonese showed the prevailing answer to be that few people spoke it (92.6%), only 5% considered that quite a lot of Ayerbe's residents used it and an exiguous 2.4% stated that almost everybody spoke it.

These answers are based on the calculations of participants. These conversely are supposed to be based on their own experiences, on their own interactions. Nevertheless, it is quite likely that their attitudes in favour or against Aragonese and the existence of prejudices would have exerted some influence and no doubt they would have been shaped by the drop in the usage levels of Aragonese and their reduction in social visibility.

Their beliefs do not seem to be consistent with the parameters corresponding to the amount of those who claimed that could actually speak it in question 17, where 47.6% of those who had to answer the question claimed to be able to do so. They show that the perceptions of the participants on the Aragonese spoken in their environment, which is where they can count on first hand references based on their personal experience, are of quite a low usage. They seem to show, as they do in other contexts like Asturian¹ that people believe that they speak more Aragonese in other areas that are not their area and also, that they believe they themselves may speak it, but other people do not (as they may not be aware they do). Although it may well be the case that on interviewing in other areas the same rhetoric would be found: "we don't speak it here, but *there* they do".

¹ Llera Ramo and San Martín Antuña, *II Estudio sociolingüístico de Asturias*, p. 225.

Graph 16 How many people speak the local variety?



There are no extremisms correlated to ideological factors, nor to the political party voted, since there are not any outstanding percentages linked between these answers and any of those regarding the political parties, neither in the correlations to regional identity, as the largest percentage of those who said that only a few people spoke it, 45.9% had claimed that they felt as much Spanish as Aragonese. Conversely, of those who had said that quite a lot of people spoke it, all of them had stated that they felt first Aragonese and then Spanish, however, this Aragonese feeling was not sustained when it came to those who claimed that almost everybody spoke it.

It seems therefore that the perception of the participants regarding the amount of people who speak Aragonese in Ayerbe is quite low, which contradicts the general idea that the collective projection can be greater in the immediate environment, since primary interactions tend to happen there and they decrease as we distance ourselves physically from that primary nucleus. This could suggest that there may be an undervaluation and ostracism of Aragonese due to linguistic prejudice.

For a second time, those who had replied affirmatively to question fifteen were asked an additional question (Q 21) this time about the amount of people in Ayerbe they believed that would know the other linguistic variety even if they did not speak it. They were given again the same options as before and they could reply: few know it, quite a lot of people know it or almost everybody knows it. The results can be seen in Graph 17.

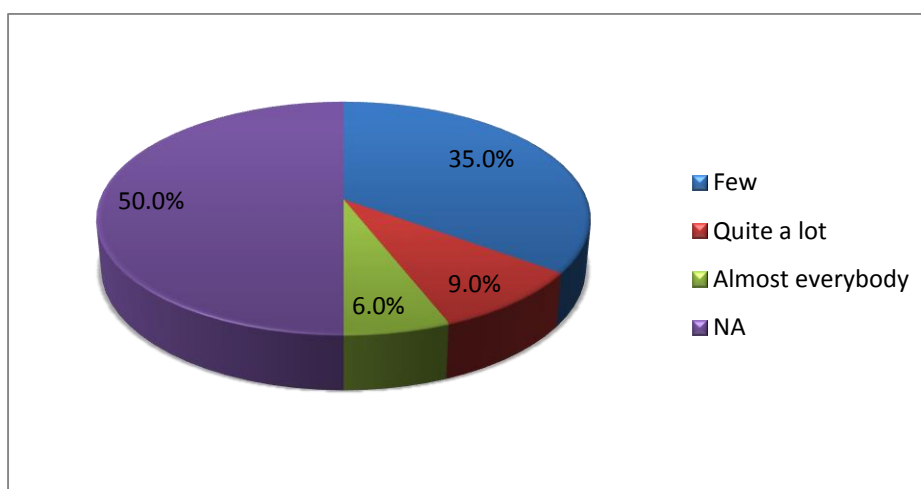
The answers did differ slightly from those responses to the previous question, with a virtually six fold increase on those who had stated that almost everybody spoke it, rising to 12.4% for those who could understand it. The perceived amount of those who could understand it being “quite a lot” was also greater than the answer in the previous question, with 17.6%. The amount of those who thought that only few people understood it decreased accordingly, but it was still most of them (70%) who thought so.

These results emerged despite the fact that from the total sample which was selected completely randomly, more than half stated that there was another linguistic variety in Ayerbe and most of those in turn admitted some knowledge of it. These perceptions are not consistent at all with the figures corresponding to the amount of participants who claimed that they could in fact understand it in question 16, where 82.6% of those who had to answer the question claimed to be able to do so. The discrepancy in the results indicates an enormous lack of linguistic awareness, similar to other cases where Aragonese material has been compiled: “Iste comportamiento lebaba a muitos informadors a negar en primeras a esistenza d’una fabla propia u a acumular o suyo empleo a u a atras personas

de diferién casa, bico, lugar u bal; por ixo muitas begatas yera mas fázil replegar datos de localidaz más u menos bizinas a ra d'o informador, que de ra suya propia”².

The behaviour of the participants in Ayerbe seemed to reproduce a conception of “I understand it but there are not many of us” situation, in which people associate the interactions using that language to low status ones, happening in their primary environment and reflecting a form of social diglossia. Otherwise it would have meant that I had experienced the unlikely scenario of having interviewed the majority of the people in the village who could understand it.

Graph 17 How many people know the local variety?



There is nothing noteworthy about the socio-demographic profile of those who had to answer this question, and not even on the ideological front are there any outstanding features. Regarding the Aragonese identity of those who had to answer this question, if they had claimed that they felt first Aragonese and then Spanish perhaps they would have

² Martín, Otero and Pérez, p. 166.

connected as a consequence their feeling Aragonese with the fact that everybody around them may feel the same and as such understands Aragonese, however the percentages were too low to even explore that assumption, since out of those who had stated that almost everybody knew the other linguistic variety in Ayerbe, the greatest percentage who had claimed that they felt first Aragonese and then Spanish was only 40%. Out of those who chose to answer “few”, the greatest percentage (42.9%) had stated earlier on that they felt as Spanish as Aragonese, and the same situation occurred with those who had answered “quite a lot”, with 57.1% claiming that they felt just as Spanish as Aragonese.

On the political side, the results were not outstanding either, most people who did not need to answer this question because they had negated in question fifteen the existence of another linguistic variety had either not voted, doubtless mostly linked to the majority 18-24 age group where some of those interviewed would have not been old enough to vote on the previous election; or voted for the main political parties, mainly PP, followed closely by PSOE. Out of those who had stated that almost everybody understood it, the greatest percentage belonged to IU voters (40%). Incidentally this political party has been known to defend the language status of Aragonese³ which may have had an influence on their answer. Out of those who stated that quite a lot of people understood it, the greatest amount (42.9%) had voted PAR and those who claimed that only a few people understood it had distributed their votes in an even way, maybe with a slight priority for the two main political parties: PP and PSOE.

³ *El Periódico de Aragón* <<http://www.redaragon.com>> [accessed 5 April 2011].

With reference to the age at which participants had come to live to Ayerbe, a high proportion (73.5%) of those who did not have to answer the question related to the time when they had moved into the village because they had always lived in the village, answered that few people understood it. Whereas the totality of those who had moved into the village after age 12 answered that “quite a lot” of people understood it; maybe linked to the fact that having come from a different village, the acknowledgment of linguistic difference may have been greater.

These results compared to the answers to question 16 also show that there seems to be an under-perception of the real presence of Aragonese. Those who answered “No” to Question 15 and therefore acknowledged that there was no other linguistic variety other than Castilian Spanish in Ayerbe, were subsequently invited to comment in Question 22 on the reason as to why they thought that was the case.

The destiny of languages is connected to those of its speakers. When there is pressure, be it socially, culturally, economically or even military on a community, the response can lead to language shift and eventually language death. When a language stops performing a specific function, it will be replaced in that function by another one, when it is replaced in all the functions and parents and elders do not feel the necessity to transmit it to their children, that language dies⁴. The family environment appears to be the main means of transmission of a minority language and other than its presence in the education system and the media, the transmission of the vernacular linguistic register from parents to

⁴ Nettle and Romaine, p. 7.

children was and still is to a great degree the only way to acquire linguistic competence in Aragonese.

When domestic language transmission from one generation to the following one is sustained, language maintenance can be assured, if this flow falters or stops, that language becomes particularly at risk and its maintenance is threatened,⁵ in the same way as the maintenance of Aragonese is threatened then death may well be what will come to pass to the language, as elders are already feeling the lack of purpose in transferring it inter-generationally.

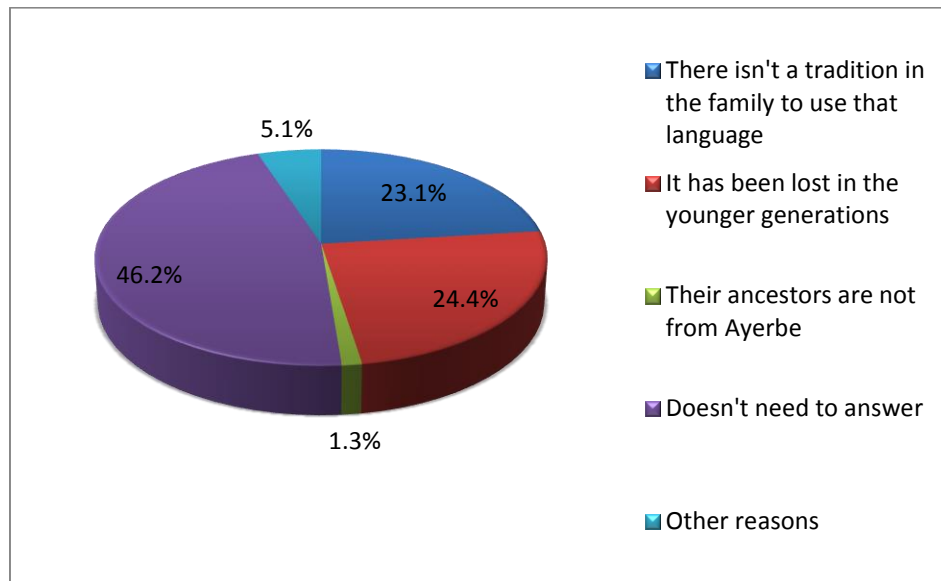
The percentages that can be seen in Graph 18 show the opinion of those who believe that there is no other linguistic variety in Ayerbe, since those who had replied affirmatively to Question 15 did not have to answer this question. Most of those who believe that only Castilian Spanish is used in Ayerbe, think that is mostly due to either the fact that there is no family tradition in the use of the language (42.8%) or that it has been lost in the younger generations (45.3%). Only 2.2% believe that it is due to the fact that their ancestors do not come from Ayerbe and 9.5% believe that the reasons are other than those stated. Unfortunately, most of those who chose the “other reason” option did not supply any details about what those other reasons were apart from one who wrote that the reason why there was not a variety in Ayerbe anymore is that it was not taught. This person obviously agrees with the theory that a lack of presence of a language in the education system is detrimental for the language.

⁵ John Edwards, ‘Language Revitalisation and its Discontents’, p. 3.

It is clear that most participants believed that Aragonese finds itself in an inter-generational process of withdrawal like many minority languages⁶, in as much as most of those who had had Aragonese as a mother tongue were not teaching it to their own children, gradually decreasing a linguistic reproduction through the family line and therefore giving rise to Aragonese completely losing ground against Castilian Spanish. Since most participants believe that there is no tradition in the family to use Aragonese in the domestic domain and neither is there any other active linguistic setting outside the home such as the school or the workplace, this will eventually entail that the language will be totally lost for the younger generations. For a very small amount of participants the most important reason for the absence was that their parents did not come from Ayerbe and therefore they probably did not feel that they could relate to the other linguistic variant in the village. Also, in view of the fact that Aragonese does not have enough institutional support, they would not have been able to experience the language in the same way as if it had been used as a domestic language of transmission without interruption.

⁶ Llera Ramo and San Martín Antuña, *II Estudio sociolingüístico de Asturias*, p. 227.

Graph 18 Reasons for absence of intergenerational transmission



If the origin of the parents is taken as a hypothesis of greater or lesser influence on the transmission of Aragonese, with parents who had come from a non-Aragonese speaking area being more likely to not pass on their knowledge to their progeny, it would be unexpected to learn that out of those who replied that there is no tradition in the family to use that language the greatest percentage (38.9%) came from those whose parents were both from Ayerbe. On the other hand, this could be interpreted as a first hand experience of those who have not had the language passed on to them. Linked to this, is the fact that more than half of those who provided the same answer (55.6%) are not or have not been married and if they have children, they probably do not transmit the language themselves.

Having reached tertiary education also leads to the belief that there is no family tradition to use the language, since all of those who had studied a degree claimed so, in addition to half of those who had studied for a University diploma. It is worth considering that all of

these participants would have spent more time away from the home and therefore had fewer opportunities to come into contact with the language.

When correlating the answers to this question with the age of the participants, it was those from the three lowest age groups who predominantly claimed (66.7%) that there is no tradition in the family to use it, attesting a phenomenon that the younger generations would have experienced in their own lifetime. As expected, it was those belonging to the two oldest age groups who claimed by the highest percentage (42.2%) that the language has been lost in the younger generations, probably after realising that the language that could be heard much more in Ayerbe when they were younger was not as common nowadays. Maybe due to the parents not transmitting it to their offspring or maybe due to the offspring not taking it up because they did not find it useful.

It seems, according to those who answered this question, as if Aragonese is certainly losing the function of being transferred inter-generationally however it is worth remembering that this question was only answered by those who did not think Aragonese was used in Ayerbe.

5.3. Perception of Aragonese outside Alto Aragon (Q.25)

People from various parts of the Aragonese region, from the Teruel province for instance, may be less familiar with the Aragonese language than those who live in the Huesca province or in the North of Zaragoza province where its presence is felt more frequently. Therefore those who do not live in the Alto Aragon area where it is more usual to come across Aragonese may have a different view regarding the way people from the Alto

Aragon area speak. They may fail to appreciate the linguistic difference and associate the unfamiliarity with inaccuracy or error on the part of the speakers. Since Ayerbe is located close to the Alto Aragon area boundary, which in this zone seems to roughly equate to the boundary of the parts where the Aragonese language is still known to be used, one does not need to go that far South to realise the misconceptions of the inhabitants of surrounding villages as regards the way people speak in Ayerbe. In villages as close enough as Marracos or Puendeluna it is commonly believed that people in Ayerbe speak “badly” as in these villages they traditionally think of a language that incorporates Aragonese words and constructions as badly spoken Castilian Spanish. Also, sometimes they may find it difficult to understand some words people from Ayerbe say, as the former may think they are speaking Castilian Spanish and the latter do not consider those words part of their linguistic repertoire after decades of language bashing⁷. The people from these surrounding villages would be the ones that have had close contact with people from Ayerbe and they may have made some linguistic comments, thus making people from Ayerbe aware of the differences. Hence in this question (Q 25) the perception of those who live in Ayerbe is sought as regards their insight into what other people may think of their speech. Participants were asked what they believed that people who did not live in the Alto Aragon area thought about the way people spoke in Ayerbe. The three main options given were “we speak well”, “we speak badly” or “we speak in a different way (without any value added)”. Speaking “badly” has been used as an answer in several studies, thus reflecting a lack of linguistic conscience. The most prominent case being the answers given to the ‘denomination of your own register’ question a few decades ago seen

⁷ Where they have been told at school not to be “uneducated” and stop using those constructions which are typically rural i.e. Aragonese.

in map 5 of ALEANR⁸ where “hablar basto” and “hablar mal” were recurrent answers. If by speaking “badly” we understand using different lexical, syntactical, morphological and phonetic features, then in Ayerbe they speak “badly”, in as far as there is a use of Aragonese. However, the participants of this study mostly thought that they spoke well. The results can be seen in Table 13.

Almost half of those interviewed believed that people in Ayerbe are seen as speaking well and therefore there is no stigma attached to the quotidian use of their language. Whereas two in five still think that others may think they speak “badly” thus adding to their concern about their usage of Aragonese, and again almost the same amount (22.5%) consider that people may think they speak differently, but cannot quite determine whether that is positive or negative. It is worth noticing that quite a large amount of the participants, as many as 13.7% opted for the “no response” option. When choosing not to answer this question, the reason may have been lack of experience. It is likely that either they did not know how to compare themselves to other speakers who did not live in the Alto Aragon area or perhaps they were not aware of any differences.

Table 13 Perception of language used in Ayerbe

	Percent
We speak well	42.5%
We speak “badly”	21.3%
We speak in a different way (no value given)	22.5%
No Response	13.7%

⁸ Manuel Alvar (with the collaboration of Antonio Llorente, Tomás Buesa, and Elena Alvar), *Atlas lingüístico y etnográfico de Aragón, Navarra y Rioja (ALEANR)*, 12 vols (Madrid/ Zaragoza: Departamento de Geografía Lingüística del CSIC/IFC, 1979-1983).

None of the participants belonging to the lowest age group 18-25 chose the answer we speak “badly”. This could be related to the fact that as it has been seen in previous answers, this age group is not too familiar with the Aragonese language, they do not use it much, in fact, to a great extent they are not aware of its existence since only a third did in Question 15. Therefore without the presence of Aragonese, there would not be any salient features to make someone think that people in Ayerbe spoke significantly dissimilar than people from Huesca for example. On the other hand there was another age group (46-55) that due to their personal experiences in the previous decades which may have led to a greater awareness, answered mostly (61.5%) that they spoke “badly”. At the other end of the spectrum those over 65 could be found agreeing with the lowest age group in that people in Ayerbe were believed to speak well, although it may have been due to entirely different reasons. They may be using Aragonese words and constructions habitually in their speech without really being aware, and although they may have been code-switching, they were believing that they were speaking Castilian Spanish all along. Probably for the same reasons, those who entered “retired” on their job description stated that they thought people in Ayerbe spoke well and similarly, like the younger generations, two thirds of students chose the “ we speak well” option. However, none of the liberal professionals did so.

More women than men said that they speak well, 51.3% against 34.1% men. This mirrors the results seen in other studies where women are seen to use more standard forms than men; they tend to do so, because women tend to be more status conscious and would like

to enhance the future prospects of their offspring⁹. This may be the case too in Ayerbe, where women may have the perception that people speak well in Ayerbe because as a rule they themselves use mostly Castilian Spanish.

When contrasting the percentages with those belonging to the level of instruction of interviewees, it could be seen that those who had completed higher education were more likely to believe that they speak badly in Ayerbe, after having been in contact and learned from people from the places where the Universities are, mostly Huesca and Zaragoza, they probably considered themselves as belonging to a more educated category which does not use the vernacular language on their daily interactions, and that was shown when choosing between the three categories labelling the mode of the language, since the totality chose the option “we speak badly”. Those who had finished their primary education answered mostly (61.1%) that they spoke in a different way but not quite being able to categorise it. At the other end of the spectrum, none of those who had not completed their primary education chose the “We speak badly” option, probably because they may use the vernacular without being aware that it may be seen by others as not speaking “well”.

Although some studies have shown that standard language and prestige variants are associated with the middle class¹⁰ this was not quite the case in Ayerbe, since only 44.4%

⁹ William Labov, ‘The Intersection of Sex and Social Class in the Course of Linguistic Change’, *Language Variation and Change*, 2 (1990), 205-54.

¹⁰ Ruth Wodak and Gertraud Benke, ‘Gender as a sociolinguistic variable: New perspectives on variation studies’ in *The Handbook of Sociolinguistics* ed. by Florian Coulmas (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), pp. 127-28.

of participants chose the option: “we speak well”. However it is worth noting that in this study almost the totality of participants had placed themselves in the middle-class section.

It may not have been remarkable to find that the largest majority of all the options of those who voted for CHA: one in two chose the option of a different way of speaking- without any value being given to it; since they may not have wanted to compromise by answering either of the two ways. However, what was unexpected was that 75% of those who voted IU chose the “speak badly” option, since this party as seen before has been know to raise the linguistic awareness of its voters through their propaganda.

It seems as if the stigma associated to the use of the Aragonese language is linked to geography, and greatly linked to gender. Also, as it could be seen from the questions on sections 4.1 and 4.2, age is thoroughly related to the knowledge and awareness of the presence of the vernacular. However unlike in the answers to the questions on those sections, the level of education here is concurrent with the level of identification.

5.4.Presence of Aragonese in Ayerbe’s society (Q 26&27)

The cultural non-material¹¹ patrimony was recognised by UNESCO as a fundamental element of conservation as well as a development of identity and a cultural variety. If we take into account their definition of traditional and popular culture as: “la totalidad de las creaciones basadas por tradición de una comunidad cultural, expresada por un grupo o individuos y aprobada como el reflejar de las expectativas de una comunidad en la medida

¹¹ Or intangible (expression also opted for).

en que ellos reflejan su identidad cultural y social. Sus normas y valores son transmitidos oralmente por la imitación o por otro medio. Sus formas están entre otros, la lengua, la literatura, la música...”¹² therefore, according to UNESCO’s declaration, it could be extracted that the Aragonese language constitutes a “patrimonio común de la humanidad y debe ser reconocida y consolidada en beneficio de las generaciones presentes y futuras.”¹³ However the users of the language will first have to recognise its presence in order for it to be consolidated.

As Ayerbe is a village where one can find among other features, a magazine¹⁴ with a prominent article of one or two pages in Aragonese plus sometimes poems, information or notes in the same language every three months, together with some sections in the programmes for the festivals and numerous announcements for activities and events displayed on boards or on walls, as well as names of associations¹⁵ and businesses in Aragonese; it is therefore not that difficult to come across the Aragonese language, at least in the written form. Therefore, participants were asked in the next two questions about the popular traditions present in Ayerbe’s society and in relation to their wishes about their preservation. In Question 26 they were invited to share their awareness of the presence of any popular traditions in Ayerbe in the vernacular language, and if their answer was affirmative, they were asked to provide the name of the tradition. The results can be seen in Graph 19.

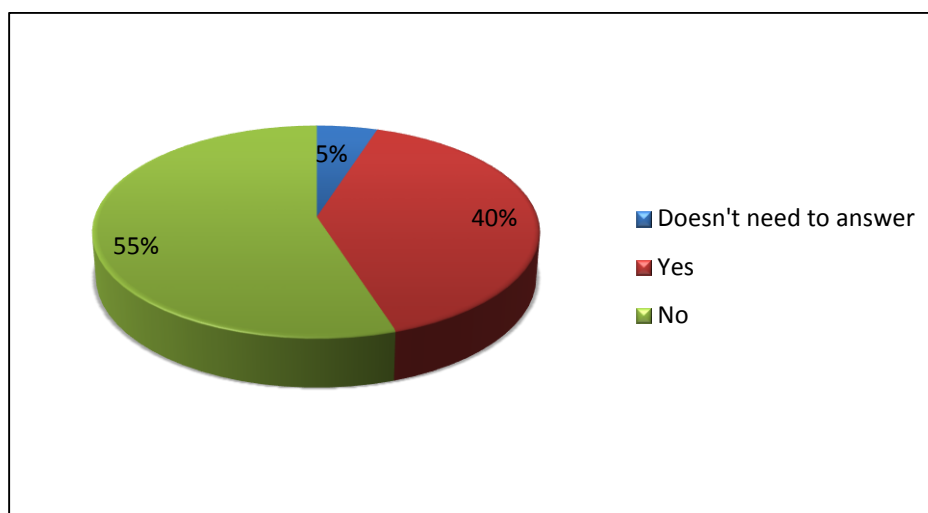
¹² *International Cultural Diversity Declaration*. UNESCO Directory of Intangible Cultural Heritage <<http://www.culturaldiversity.cioff.ch/sp/unesco.html>> [accessed 26 March 2004].

¹³ *Declaración Universal sobre la Diversidad Cultural*. UNESCO Comisión Nacional Para el desarrollo de los pueblos indígenas Gobierno Federal de México <<http://www.cdi-gob.mx/conadepi/lenguamaterna/declaracionuniv.pdf>> [accessed 26 March 2004].

¹⁴ ALPIAC: Comarca de Ayerbe.

¹⁵ i.e. Asociación “La Galliguera”.

Graph 19 Vernacular language use in cultural tradition

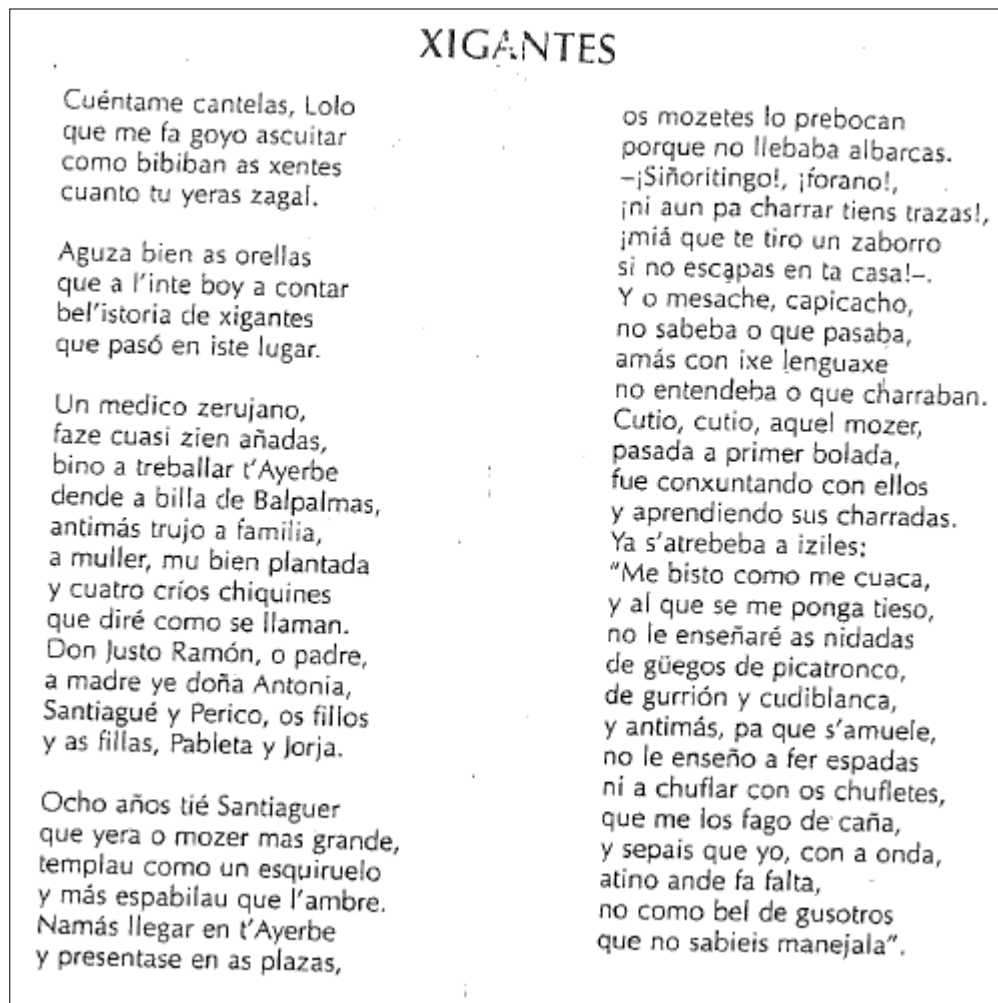


Only two-fifths stated that there were popular traditions in Ayerbe where the vernacular language was used, against the majority, 55% who answered negatively. However, it was obvious when conducting the questionnaires that this might be the case, since some participants looked puzzled and searchingly when they read this question, despite the fact that on my several visits to the village I did not fail to notice one kind or another of Aragonese event or writing, officially or unofficially on shop windows, etc. It may be the case that either people do not notice it, or it is not reaching everybody, however, since those who answered this questionnaire were people that I mostly came across on the streets or in public places, it is somewhat peculiar that they would not notice this kind of thing. A significantly typical example is the christening of the “Xigantes”¹⁶ whose name was in Aragonese and they were introduced to society with a poem written in Aragonese

¹⁶ They are giant outfits resembling popular characters and these were “christened” in October 2002.

only months prior to the questionnaire being done. Although Ayerbe is known in the area and in the rest of Aragon for its “giants”, this is the kind of cultural event that participants failed to remember.

Figure 3 Xigantes poem



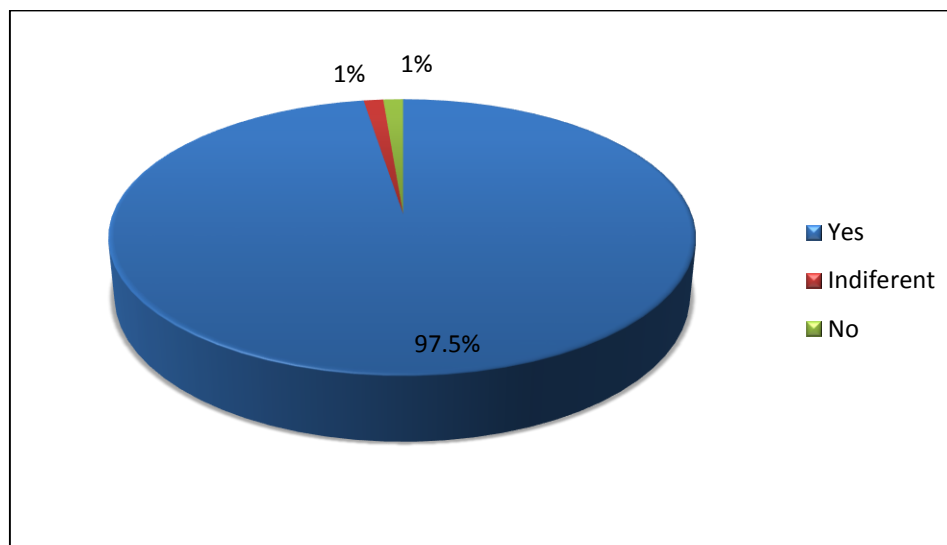
Source: Luis Pérez Gella, 2002

When those who had replied affirmatively to this question were asked to name the popular traditions, as many as a quarter of them did not reply. This was probably because they either had an idea of hearing or reading Aragonese or maybe they remembered Aragonese being used but did not know exactly when; or perhaps they did not answer because they

could not think of a specific event. Fortunately those who answered were incredibly explicit. The majority commented on the use of Aragonese during the festivals, in the programme, the opening speech, the bonfires or the “pastorada”. This was surely fresh in their minds since the first stage of the questionnaires was done during the festivals in September. Some others mentioned the local magazine, songs, verse compositions, jotás, adverts, cultural events and stickers, after the famous sign on the back of the cars: “Chufale que d’Ayerbe ye”. They also commented on the use of nicknames, proverbs and sayings and one participant even ventured to write one of the sayings on the side of the page: “D’Ayerbe y ploras, no comerás moras”. There were also comments about a person from Ayerbe who writes in Aragonese in a famous newspaper in the Huesca province and who speaks in Aragonese on the radio.

Those who had answered affirmatively to the previous question, were then asked a further question, Question 27, inquiring about whether they would like those traditions in the vernacular language to be kept. They could then agree, disagree or tick the option “it doesn’t matter”. The results can be seen in Graph 20.

Graph 20 Would you like to conserve the local traditions in the vernacular language?



The vast majority of those who had to answer the question, 94.1% said that they would like for those traditions to be kept whereas only 2.9% disagreed and the same amount did not think it mattered whether they were kept or not, obviously not thinking it relevant whether cultural diversity was preserved or not. One very active participant also wrote on the side of the page “y que fueran más profundas” stating in this way that the amount of traditions is not enough and that they probably do not use the Aragonese language sufficiently either.

Linguistic diversity is often used as a benchmark of cultural diversity and it is often symptomatic of a language death when culture in that language starts waning, consequently, when that language disappears, a particular way of life dies as well¹⁷. It is therefore possible that with people not being aware and maybe thus showing their

¹⁷ Nettle and Romaine, p. 7.

disinterest in the cultural events which use the vernacular language in Ayerbe, Aragonese may also be starting to fade in this area. It is also worth noting that there have been sociolinguistic studies of language attitudes which have demonstrated that stereotypes about people are repeatedly projected onto their languages and cultures¹⁸. Maybe people from Ayerbe do not want to be associated with a “society” that uses Aragonese to express its culture. Would they notice it, if the Aragonese language stopped being there? Since many of them do not notice it when it is used, maybe they would not. However, on the other hand, the vernacular language is so intrinsically connected to Ayerbe’s society that it is just inconspicuously part of it.

5.5.Linguistic Stigma (Q 24)

Linguistic stigma is linked often to prestige and the linguistic awareness of the speakers. Prestige and stigma, according to William Labov¹⁹ affect the linguistic choices of the speakers and in his study in Martha’s Vineyard carried out in 1963 his research gave way to what he called linguistic insecurity, which was identified when the participants were asked to give subjective evaluations of their own speech; as they were extremely negative about it.

A somewhat similar situation was put forward to the participants in Ayerbe when in Question 24, they were asked about their linguistic perception of the Aragonese language with the intention to observe whether or not they attributed a stigma to it. Only those who

¹⁸ Nettle and Romaine, p. 58.

¹⁹ William Labov, *Sociolinguistic Patterns* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972), p. 117.

had confirmed that there was another linguistic variety in Ayerbe in Q. 15 were now asked this question. If it had been posed to everybody, there may have been an increase in the percentages of the second answer as it had not been considered a language previously but a way of speaking which was probably not the correct one in their eyes, compared with Castilian Spanish which would have been the prestige language. When aiming to figure out how the participants perceive the potential linguistic stigma, they were given two options; they could answer that it was a normal linguistic variety or they could consider it as an incorrect or badly spoken linguistic variety. Unlike in Labov's study, and as can be seen in Table 14, the participants were not particularly negative about Aragonese, in fact, 74.3% did not show any insecurity and answered that it was a normal linguistic variety, awarding it the category of language and not linking it to any linguistic stigma. There was only a quarter of purely diglossic answers who associated the vernacular language with an incorrect way of speaking. Despite a lack of socio-cultural consensus and a clear need for the normalisation of Aragonese, the previous answers show a somewhat positive attitude towards the language. In addition to what seems like a rejection of the linguistic stigma often linked to Aragonese thus tentatively leaving behind some of the prejudices attached to it.²⁰

²⁰ Llera Ramo and San Martín Antuña, *II Estudio sociolingüístico de Asturias*, p. 150.

Table 14 How do you consider the local variety?

	Frequency	Percent
Not required to answer	41	51.2%
A normal linguistic variety	29	36.2%
A vulgar linguistic variety	7	8.8%
Did not answer	3	3.8%

For those who answered that the vernacular language was an incorrect or badly spoken linguistic variety, the greatest percentage (42.9%) belonged to those over 65 and retired, as well as 71.4% who had completed their primary education, as opposed to those who said that it was a normal linguistic variety who belonged to the (36-55) age groups and had mostly completed their Baccalaureate or their University studies.

In terms of social class, it was those belonging predominantly to the middle or the upper classes who answered that it was an incorrect variety. When considering the political orientation of those who answered that it was a normal variety, the greatest percentage (55.2%) belonged to those who wanted an increase in devolved autonomy as soon as possible, thus associating the variety with a proper language at the same time as wanting more political independence. The totality of those who had voted for PSOE and IU, and most of the PP voters (87.5%) also agreed, but only two thirds of CHA and PAR voters believed that the vernacular was a normal linguistic variety. This shows a clear syndrome of linguistic alienation in those social sectors which should precisely be closer to the vernacular register. Although it is worth remembering that these answers only relate to a small percentage of the totality of participants.

Clare Mar-Molinero mentioned that Galicia was “a backward and traditional society not experiencing the challenges of modernisation or industrialisation that were taking place in Catalonia and the Basque Country. It was also geographically very isolated, a feature that has always helped shape Galician history”²¹, the same could be said about Alto Aragon and about how the characteristics that were detrimental for the development of the area, like economic scarcity, poverty and backwardness, were the ones that helped the language survival. However, these characteristics are now associated to the language and that is the way it is represented. In addition to that, and also similarly to Galician²², Aragonese has been known to appear rustic, antiquated and comical and many jokes have arisen based on the symbol of the ‘country bumpkin’ image of the speaker of Aragonese, granting the vernacular with a clear damaging stigma. Even as long ago as the second half of the XIX century, there were some written references in “a pastorada” to the prejudices that existed in relation to the way people spoke in Ayerbe: “ Que aunque yo charre ansina, / Mi padre ye buen cristiano / y me enseñó a doctrina”²³

As in Question 25, the potential presence of what is known as linguistic stigma was due to the effect that the existence of a language that denotes prestige, in this case Castilian Spanish, could exert on the linguistic minority. However, in both questions, the majority of participants discarded the answer that implied that linguistic stigma.

5.6.Conclusions

²¹ Clare Mar-Molinero, *The Spanish speaking world: A practical introduction to Sociolinguistic issues* (London—New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 38-39.

²² Beswick, p. 62.

²³ Chesus Giménez Arbués and Francho Nagore Lain, ‘A pastorada d’Ayerbe. Edición y estudio’ *Luenga & Fablas*, 2, (1998), 79-109.

The linguistic awareness and perceptions of people from Ayerbe seem to be very mixed. On the one hand, they are considerably disposed to recognize the association of the linguistic variety used in Ayerbe other than Castilian Spanish with other ways of speaking in the Alto Aragon area, whilst on the other hand, there is the inconsistency of a majority who perceive the number of people who know Aragonese to be very small, despite the fact that out of the very same people who had acknowledged its presence, the great majority had claimed to be able to understand it, thus proving a manner of social diglossia.

As a norm however, there seems to be a lack of awareness, illustrated by the fact that there is no perception of the true spoken interactions in Aragonese in the immediate environment, always pointing at people outside the primary nucleus as the true speakers, therefore showing an ostracism of Aragonese.

The use of the Aragonese language is disappearing from Ayerbe according to its inhabitants due mainly to it being lost in the younger generations, mostly expressed by the older generations, followed closely by a lack of family tradition in the use of the language, mostly expressed by the younger generations. This sort of blaming game is for the most part due to a lack of active linguistic settings outside the home.

The awareness of the popular traditions in Ayerbe where the vernacular language is used is rather weak, since there is a clear majority who claims to be completely unfamiliar with the existence of any of the many traditions in the vernacular language in the village and even several of those who admitted that there were some could not then name any. However, almost the totality of those who recognised them would like them to be kept.

Nevertheless, these fundamental elements of cultural variety and development of identity would not be able to be preserved and recognised by UNESCO unless the people from Ayerbe become aware first.

Despite that lack of awareness of the presence of the Aragonese language, the perception of the linguistic habits in Ayerbe was positive for the future of the language. The majority of the participants did not perceive a potential stigma attached to it, and considered it a normal linguistic variety awarding it the category of language and not an incorrect way of speaking. Despite the clear need for normalisation, the social status of Aragonese appears to have developed and it seems as if some of the prejudices frequently associated to Aragonese are starting to be left behind, although not entirely by some essential politico-social sectors of society. The perception of the way they speak in Ayerbe was truly divided between among others, some of the younger generations who mostly do not use Aragonese and therefore believe that in Ayerbe they speak well, and other sectors like those with a high level of instruction who probably think of using Aragonese as speaking “badly” or differently.

In spite of the strong presence of Castilian Spanish and the consequent potential linguistic stigma, as a whole, the option that implied that linguistic stigma was mostly discarded.

6. Linguistic consumption

In this sub-section the cultural habits of Ayerbe's inhabitants are analysed, at the beginning there is a focus on their *reading habits* (Q 49-52), followed by a study of their *audio consumption* (Q 47 and 49). Ideally, this section would have analysed their audiovisual consumption, including some questions on their consumption of TV programmes. Unfortunately, there are only a few sporadic transmissions not entirely in Aragonese which are not known to the majority of Aragon's citizens. These would not have been sufficient to provide enough data on that issue to make it reliable.

6.1 Reading habits in Aragonese (Q 49-52)

Since the Aragonese language finds itself in a diglossic situation, it is paramount to track the evolution of cultural consumption and particularly of publications in order to do an evaluation of the potential normalisation process¹. In terms of prevalence in print or in the media, the presence of Aragonese is by and large fairly small, therefore, in the case of Aragonese, rather than exploring a normalisation process, the situation would be closer to analysing the social decline.

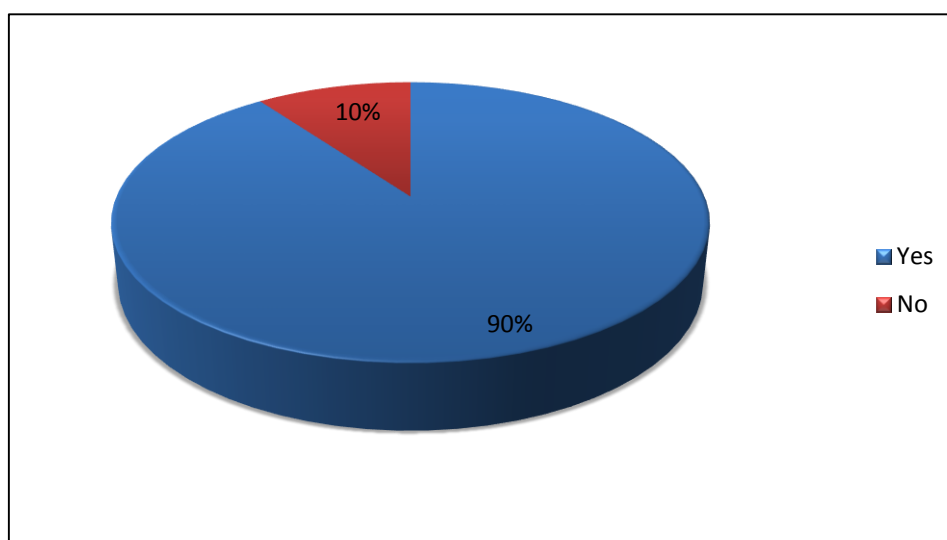
All the participants were asked about their reading habits regarding books, periodical publications and magazines. First of all, they were asked whether or not they had books at home (Q 49), looking at the general book possession, and subsequently they were asked

¹ Llera Ramo and San Martín Antuña, *II Estudio sociolingüístico de Asturias*, p. 231.

about the proportion of those books they owned that were in Aragonese (Q 50). The results for both questions can be seen in Graph 21 below.

When asked about the ownership of books, virtually everybody (90%) responded that they had books at home against 10% who did not. However, the results regarding those who owned books in Aragonese were considerably different.

Graph 21 Book ownership



Before the political transition, all the now co-official languages in Spain, already had a relatively important editorial production, but what has truly set these productions in motion has been the establishment of the Autonomous Communities and the initiation of the linguistic policies. The most revealing data is the amount of books published in Galician, Catalan and Euskera which they more than doubled already in the first decade

after the transitional period², authors in these languages have continued to be enormously prolific.

As regards Aragonese, since the *renaxedura de l'aragonés* in the seventies there has also been a marked increase in the number of books published, since 1971 this has increased every five years with the greatest increase so far from 1996 until 2000. In the last five years of the twentieth century the number of books written more than doubled to over one hundred. What is more, almost all of these books (75%)³ are published in the standardised form of Aragonese, according to the “normas graficas de l'aragonés emologatas en o I Congreso ta ra a normalizazi3n de l'aragonés”.⁴ However, there is only a reduced percentage of the published books that fit the non-literary prose category which according to Kloss is indispensable together with a minimum of compliance with linguistic norms in order to be able to speak sociolinguistically of a ‘language by elaboration’. Taking Kloss’s categorisation of *Ausbau* and *Abstand* languages,⁵ there have been some authors like Fernández Rei⁶ who have classified Aragonese as an *Abstand* language by linguistic distance from Castilian Spanish due to its significant characteristic features⁷. However, Aragonese could also be said to belong to the *Ausbau* category albeit placed at the beginning of that much needed process of adjustment and standardisation. Therefore there

² Miquel Siguán, *España plurilingüe* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1992), p. 287.

³ Francho Nagore Laín, ‘Os libros en aragonés en os años 1996-2000’, *Luenga & Fabras*, 7, (2003), 93-108, pp. 94-5.

⁴ Reached after a long process of discussions which culminated at the I Congreso ta ra a normalizazi3n de l'Aragonés (1987).

⁵ Heinz Kloss. 1967. ‘Abstand Languages and Ausbau Languages’, *Anthropological Linguistics*, 9, 7, 29-41.

⁶ Francisco Fernández Rei, ‘El aragonés, lengua románica (re)emergente’ in *Autas d’a I trobada de estudios y rechiras arredol d’a luenga aragonesa y a suya literatura*, ed. by Francho Nagore Laín, Francho Rodés Orquín, and Chesus Vázquez Obrador, (Huesca: IEA & CFA, 1999), pp. 43-74.

⁷ Although confirming that the number of those features is not substantial and its transmission is not distributed too homogeneously.

should be a need for more non literary books with contents as varied as: scientific topics, manuals, outdoor or free time activities, etc. in order for Aragonese to better consolidate its category of a 'language by elaboration' in the current sociolinguistic situation.

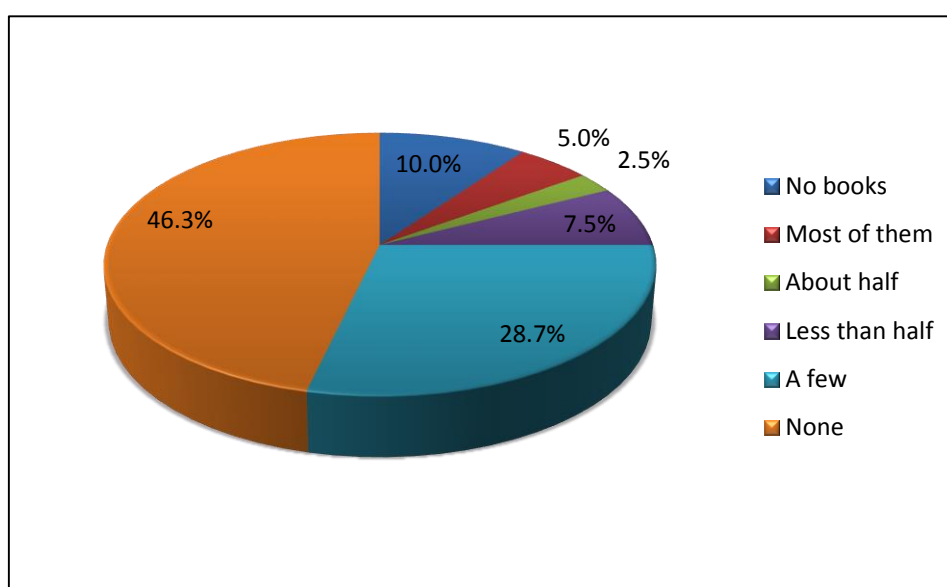
In Ayerbe, once those who did not have any books at home were eliminated, which as expected coincided with those who had a lower level of education, it was extraordinary to find that just under half of those who had claimed to have books at home (48.64%) had books in Aragonese. Out of those, more than half (32%) only have a few and those who own a large proportion are a minority (5.5%), as are those who own more or less half of them (2.8%) and those whose less than half of the books they have at home are in Aragonese (8.3%). It is worth pointing out that not everybody who has books at home reads them as some may be presents; some Aragonese institutions⁸ tend to give books as presents, some of which may be written in Aragonese, but they are not really read and sometimes they may be used as decoration. In fact, as corroboration, 8.7% of those who had answered the: I have "a few" books in Aragonese option, had claimed earlier not to be able to read Aragonese. Conversely, some of the participants may have read some books in libraries which they do not own, but this tends to be less likely. However, since the availability of books written in Aragonese is limited, despite the latter years increase, that is going to be a decisive factor related to the amount of books in Aragonese that any given person can own.

If we compare the amount of people in Ayerbe who do not have any books at all in Aragonese, with those in other minority languages with a modest book production like

⁸ Like CAI and IBERCAJA.

Asturian, who were asked the same type of question, it will be enlightening to discover that two thirds of people from Asturias (66.2%) did not have any books in the vernacular language, against the 51.4% in Ayerbe. This higher percentage for Asturian, could be linked to the fact that in other minority languages, rather than reading whole books, shorter publications like newspapers or magazines may be more accessible due to the low literacy levels of people who know the vernacular language.⁹

Graph 22 Books in Aragonese



It was once again those belonging to the younger age groups the ones that had less connection with the language, 42.1% of 18 to 35 year olds claimed not to have any books in Aragonese. In addition, more than 60% of those who had completed their University education alleged not to have any books and in any case, this group had at the very most “less than half” their books written in Aragonese. There was a clearer stance regarding

⁹ Llera Ramo and San Martin Antuña, *II Estudio sociolingüístico de Asturias*, pp. 233-36.

identity, with three in four of those who owned most of their books in Aragonese identifying themselves with the feeling of “Aragonese above all” or “mostly Aragonese”. On the other hand, CHA voters claimed to own “less than half” of their books in Aragonese or fewer. Those who did not have any books in Aragonese were mostly (52%) the voters of the two main political parties, PP and PSOE. Since some participants had confirmed earlier in the questionnaire (Q18) whether they could read Aragonese or not, it was significant to correlate the answers of those who had previously replied affirmatively and the amount of books in Aragonese they owned. Those who had claimed to be able to read Aragonese had mostly either no Aragonese books at home (38.7%) or “a few” (35.5%), and this is not due to the fact that they may have preferred to read magazines instead of books either. It was however revealing to know, that all of those who had claimed to have most of their books in Aragonese, had answered affirmatively earlier to being able to read the other linguistic variety in Ayerbe.

There have been several linguistic interviews and questionnaires on the glottophagy¹⁰ of Aragonese often blamed on the influence of a Castilian Speaking mediatised society¹¹ but only three questionnaires have related the media and the Aragonese language from a sociolinguistic approach. One was done in the village of Monzon¹² in Alto Aragon, one in the city of Huesca¹³ and one large general study on education and bilingualism covered

¹⁰ Louis-Jean Calvert, *Lingüística y colonialismo: Breve tratado de glotofagia* (Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2005).

¹¹ Chabier Tomás Arias, ‘Encuesta lingüística en Fonç y Estadilla’ in *Autas d’a II trobada de estudios y rechiras arredol d’a luenga aragonesa y a suya literatura*, ed. by Francho Nagore Laín, Francho Rodés Orquín, and Chesús Vázquez Obrador, (Huesca: IEA & CFA, 2001), pp. 299-312.

¹² Francho Nagore Laín, ‘Análís y comentario de bels datos d’o Zensu Lingüístico de Monzón de 1997’, *Fuellas d’informazion d’o Consello d’a Fabla Aragonesa*, September-October 1998, pp. 17-21.

¹³ Thomas Gallmüller, ‘Encuesta sociolingüística sobre actitudes y valoraciones de los jóvenes de Huesca capital hacia el aragonés’ in *Autas d’a III trobada de estudios y rechiras arredol d’a luenga aragonesa y a*

mostly the Alto Aragon area and the Catalan speaking areas¹⁴. Some of their questions regarding reading habits and media were similar to the ones in my questionnaire in Ayerbe and it would therefore be significant to compare their results with mine in order to identify differences.

Participants in Huesca were asked whether they owned any books in Aragonese and just over half of them (55.7%) claimed not to have any, a figure very similar to the one obtained in Ayerbe (51.4%). However, since Huesca, with institutions like the Instituto de Estudios Altoaragoneses and Consello d'a Fabla Aragonesa is the editorial capital of the Aragonese language, the results could have produced a lower percentage. Moreover, only 5.4% of the participants confirmed to own more than 10 books in Aragonese.¹⁵

Those interviewed by Martínez reached yet a lower percentage of reading Aragonese, 40.6%¹⁶, but they had been asked about whether they read books as well as magazines in the vernacular language and the number of affirmative answers regarding reading magazines tends to be lower.

It seems as if Ayerbe is exceptional in that the amount of population who owns books in Aragonese is larger than in other areas of Aragon and also when compared to the results obtained for other minority languages. It is likely that this could be linked to the high reading ability in Aragonese of its inhabitants.

suya literatura, ed by Francho Nagore Laín, Francho Rodés Orquín, and Chesus Vázquez Obrador, (Huesca: IEA & CFA, 2004), pp. 297- 328.

¹⁴ Martínez Ferrer, *Bilingüismo y Enseñanza en Aragón*.

¹⁵ Gallmüller, p. 323.

¹⁶ Martínez Ferrer, *Bilingüismo y Enseñanza en Aragón*, p. 245.

In order to carry on exploring the reading habits in Ayerbe, all the participants were additionally asked whether or not they read periodical publications and magazines (Q 51), so that their reading tendencies could be assessed, and subsequently they were asked about the proportion of those magazines and newspapers they read that were in Aragonese (Q 52). Again, the answers they could choose from regarding that proportion ranged from “none” to “most of them” with “a few”, “less than half” and “half more or less” in between.

Reading mass media, as can be seen in Table 15, is evidently more widespread than reading books. While earlier 10% of the participants did not have any books at home, now the percentage of those who do not read newspapers or magazines is reduced to 6.3%.

Table 15 Readers of newspapers and magazines

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	75	93.8%
No	5	6.3%

The access to print media by the Spanish co-official languages is completely different to the situation of Aragonese. Catalán for instance, has more than 150 published magazines¹⁷ and several daily newspapers¹⁸ published entirely in Catalan and although “Antes de la Guerra Civil, en Cataluña existía un sistema de comunicación muy variado y completo: diarios locales y generales, especializados y generalistas, revistas con gran presencia en el

¹⁷ ‘El Quiosc CAT de Palma expone más de 150 revistas en catalán’, Diario de Mallorca, <<http://www.diariodemallorca.es>> [accessed 11 March 2011].

¹⁸ Like Avui, Diari de Barcelona, Punt Diari and Diari de Lleid in Siguán, p. 186.

quiosco y en la sociedad” which disappeared during the Spanish Civil war, and “ese rico entramado no se pudo recuperar con la Transición”¹⁹ it is evident that nowadays it has developed widely. The situation is somewhat reduced for Galician, with only one daily newspaper, *Galicia Hoxe* published completely in Galician, and although there is a substantial amount of periodicals and magazines also published in the vernacular language, their circulation figures are extremely limited²⁰. In the Basque country the printed media in Euskera is not without difficulty, there are, or have been²¹, several daily papers published in Spanish that include some articles in Euskera, but the only daily paper published entirely written in Euskera was closed under accusations of supporting an armed group in 2003, and even some intellectuals known in the circles of language support groups were arrested at the time²². It seems as if even the courts have had to intervene in order to defend Euskera being used in the media²³ and for it to stop being related to ETA²⁴.

On the other hand, the presence of Aragonese in the different types of media is merely testimonial. In the written media, there is no press in Aragonese aside from some individual collaborations like a permanent column in the *Heraldo de Aragon* newspaper²⁵,

¹⁹ ‘El catalán en los medios de comunicación’ Generalitat de Catalunya <<http://www.gencat.cat>> [accessed 15 March 2011].

²⁰ Beswick, p. 183.

²¹ Deia, Gara and Egin, although this last one was forced to close in 1998 for being accused of being used by ETA.

²² *Egunkaria, the world’s only Basque language newspaper forced to close*, Sustatu, 10 March 2003, <<http://www.sustatu.com>> [accessed 13 April 2011].

²³ El Euskera en los medios de comunicación <www.lenguayprensa.uma.es> [Accessed 11 April 2011].

²⁴ Los jueces consideran erróneo relacionar el euskera con ETA 12-4-2010 in <www.lavozdegalicia.es> [Accessed 12 April 2011].

²⁵ Written on Sundays by José M^a. Satué on traditional topics (costumbrista).

another in El Pirineo Aragonés de Jaca newspaper²⁶ and some letters or collaborations that appear sporadically in the Diario del Alto Aragón²⁷.

In local magazines there are also some collaborations in Aragonese that appear frequently, like in the magazine *O Zoque* in Ballibasa, *Erata* in Biescas, the magazine *Jacetania*, *Serrablo*, etc. and sometimes there are even permanent features like the section “Redolada” in the magazine Comarca in Ayerbe²⁸. Several associations for the defense of the Aragonese language have their own magazines like *Fuellas* or *Espiello*²⁹, but that is all. The printed media situation may change should the ratification of the “ley de lenguas” on the use, protection and promotion of the “lenguas propias” in Aragon be implemented, since it has a section that specifies the regulation of those languages in the media. However, the situation can be compared with other languages like Welsh, which despite having more than seven hundred thousand speakers, no daily newspapers are published in the language.³⁰

²⁶ Called *Falordietas* by Manuel Campo.

²⁷ See article by Franchó Nagore in March 2011:

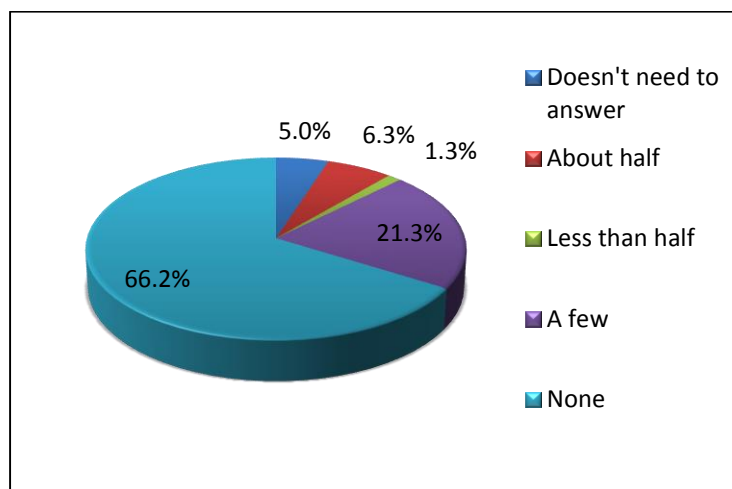
<<http://www.diariodelaltoaragon.es/NoticiasDetalle.aspx?Id=675851>> [Accessed 12 April 2011]

²⁸ By authors like Chusé Antón Santamaría or Luis Pérez Gella.

²⁹ Consello d’a Fabla Aragonesa and Nogará respectively.

³⁰ Abley, p. 251.

Graph 23 Aragonese newspaper and magazine readership



As can be seen in Graph 23, the percentage of those who claimed not to read any magazines or newspapers in Aragonese (66%) is greater in comparison to those who said that they did not have books in Aragonese at home (55.7%). However, although there is a comparative increase in the percentage of those who read roughly half their magazines and newspapers in Aragonese to 6.2%, there was absolutely nobody who answered affirmatively to the option that stated that the majority of magazines and papers they read were in Aragonese. This was probably due to the fact that if that had been the case, they would not have been able to read many at all. However, taking into account the meagre use of Aragonese in the mass media, finding 28.6% of participants who do read them in Aragonese, which would roughly equate to a quarter of Ayerbe's population, can be considered as a positive figure. And in any case, much more positive than the situation in Asturias, where despite the fact that it is generally considered easier to read shorter

publications like papers or magazines if you are not fully proficient in the language, as many as 73.7%³¹ affirmed that they did not read any at all in Asturian.

Age was a big factor in Ayerbe in terms of mass media consumption, since none of the 18-25 year group participants ever read any magazines or newspapers in Aragonese. There could be a link between the focus of the magazines written in Aragonese and the preferences of that age group, as they may not be interested in the issues written about in the few magazines in Aragonese. At any rate, being interested in them may well be an age issue, since all of the participants who had chosen the option of reading more or less half, were all over 56 years old. When correlating the answers to the level of instruction of the participants, all who had completed their higher degrees at University did not read any magazines or papers in Aragonese at all. There was not a strong feeling of Aragonese identity attached to reading in the language since even when there were 27.2% who read more or less half of their magazines or papers in Aragonese, there was also 45.4% who did not read any. In terms of political tendencies, the majority of those who chose the option “none” (50.9%) voted for the two main political parties; PP and PSOE. It was expected that those who supported the regional production may have voted for the regionalist parties, but it was not so, since despite 60% of those who read roughly half their papers and magazines in Aragonese voted PAR, as many as two thirds of CHA voters claimed not to read any in the language promoted by “their” party. It was also surprising to discover that those who had claimed to be able to read it were the ones who read the least in Aragonese, with as many as 48.3% not reading any magazines or newspapers.

³¹ Llera Ramo and San Martín Antuña, *II Estudio sociolingüístico de Asturias*, p. 328.

The low number of mass media readers in Aragonese is no doubt linked to the low availability in the market of these items, but it may also be connected to the reduced variety of subjects that these deal with. In order to be read, they need to be related to a subject that interests the buyer. There obviously seems to be a need for greater variety of topics in the Aragonese market.

6.2 Audio consumption (Q 47&48)

Although there is little provision, it is interesting to observe the audiovisual consumption in Aragonese, and due to lack of availability of the other media, specifically the ownership of music in Aragonese. The same parameters were followed for the answers in Question 48 as the ones used in the books and written media questions. Participants were also first questioned about their general possession of CDs, LPs and Cassettes (Q 47). The results for these two questions can be seen in Graph 24.

Singing has always been one of the most important means of expression and singing in your own language has been the way that many singers and bands originating from the co-official language areas in Spain express themselves. In Catalonia after the disappearance of *nova canço* as a movement, music in Catalan suffered for a number of years,³² but has since recovered and singer song writers like the iconic *Albert Pla* or groups like *Els Pets* and *Aquitamxé* among many others sing in Catalan. Singing has a privileged position in the music scenario in the Basque Country, the oral tradition survived through bards and

³² Siguán, p. 187.

poets and in the sixties it lead to the “nueva canción vasca” when poems in Euskera were sang. That was followed by the rock revolution in the seventies which has carried on until the present with bands like Negu Gorriak and Kuraia³³ and singer song writers like Ruper Ordorika who have provided new impetus to the revival process of the language.³⁴ In Galicia after the departure of the tremendously popular band Os Resentidos, many groups like Yellow Pixoliñas, A banda de poi and Dios que te crew generally sing in Galician and their lyrics are generally linked to regionalist and cultural issues³⁵. Alas, the majority of groups that sing in Catalan, Galician or Euskera tend to enjoy a substantial local following but some of them do make it into the national sphere and sometimes they even venture into the international one, thus transmitting their unequivocal linguistic identity to foreign audiences.

In Aragon, besides the typical folk “jotas”³⁶ that have survived through centuries,³⁷ the great musical impact was not felt until the seventies when the movement of singer songwriters known as “nueva canción aragonesa” started, with José Antonio Labordeta, emblem of the Aragonese politico-social consciousness, being the most popular singer. Subsequently, it was later on in the nineties that the label “rock aragonés” was born, it was used to identify rock groups that had started appearing, some of them with names in Aragonese and characterised for singing mostly in Aragonese and the use of elements of

³³ Música euskera on line <www.musikazblai.com> [Accessed 19 April 2011].

³⁴ ‘Música y canción vascas’ Euskal Kulturaren ataria <<http://www.eke.org/es/kultura/musika>> [accessed 18 April 2011].

³⁵ Beswick, p. 184.

³⁶ Some of them sang in Aragonese.

³⁷ Many jota folk groups now sing jotás and songs mostly in Aragonese like Grupo Biello Sobrarbe, A Ronda de Boltaña & A Cadiera Coixa.

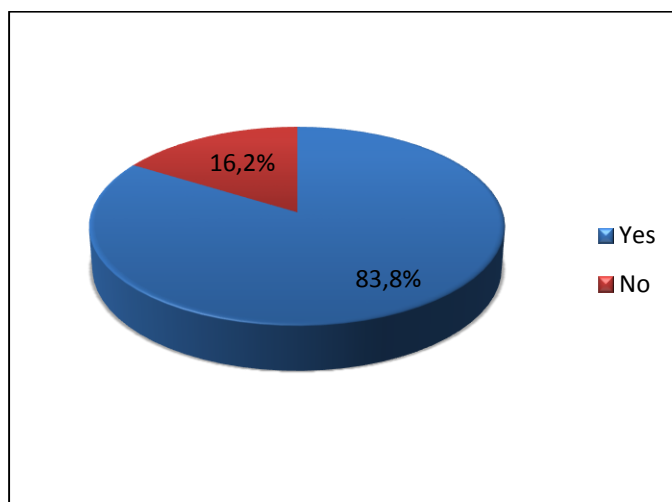
Aragonese folklore, often denouncing in their songs situations related to Aragon.³⁸ The most famous being: Mallacán, Boira preta or Ixo Rai. Since then there have been many groups and as many musical styles with groups that sing some or all of their lyrics in Aragonese like Skabeche river band, Déchusband and Comando Cucaracha among others.

Like with many other minority languages, there is a need for some comment on the audio consumption in Aragonese. Firstly, there is a difference between listening to music in Aragonese, that is songs with lyrics in Aragonese, and Aragonese music, like “jotas” for instance, although there are also some jotás in Aragonese. Listening to music is a passive consumption that does not even require the listener to understand the language, as it can be the case when listening to music in English; the music on offer is limited and the competition very strong in a market where there are many other languages, mainly Castilian Spanish and English. Also it is a type of consumption that is quite fragmented since it needs specific listening equipment and is usually directed to the young sectors of population, which as we have seen, are not the groups with the greatest awareness of the vernacular language.³⁹

³⁸ Some denounce the water issue in Aragon and sing against the instigation of new reservoirs and river leveling.

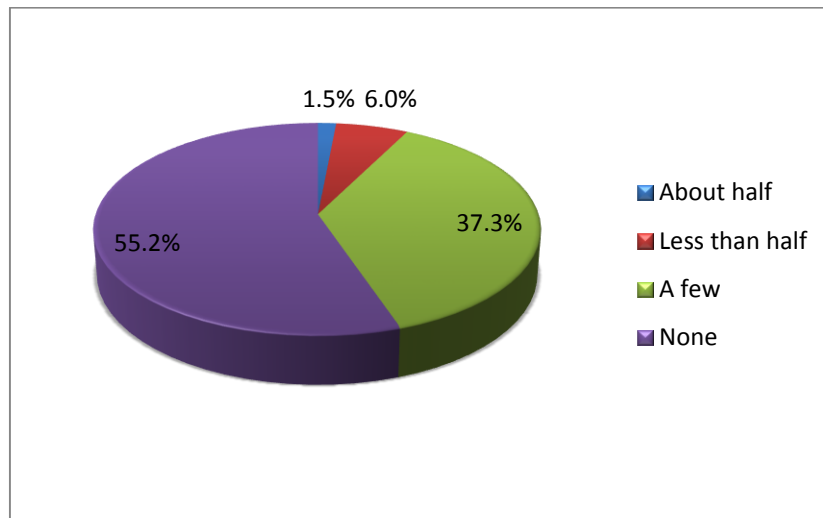
³⁹ Llera Ramo, p. 96.

Graph 24 Audio consumption



Exploring the general ownership of discs, CDs or cassettes in Aragonese, it was found that more than 8 out of 10 of those interviewed (83.8%) owned some form of musical recording. However, only a small percentage of those were in Aragonese. Nobody claimed to have most of their music in Aragonese, merely 1.5% claimed to have half of them in Aragonese and 5.9% stated to have less than half, the figures however, reached as high as 37.3% for those who replied “few”. The importance of this quantity may be due to the fact that people possibly will have some tapes or other recordings with some songs in Aragonese and others in Castilian Spanish. There are often recordings that include some regional Aragonese songs “jotas” sung in Aragonese mixed with others that are not. It is clear that this has to be the case, since not many bands create a whole tape or CD sung fully in Aragonese. This has only happened in the last couple of decades when a few Aragonese bands have sprung up. Conversely, 55.2% did not have any music in Aragonese. This figure can be compared negatively with the number of books that people in Ayerbe own but it is lower than the number of magazines and newspapers people read.

Graph 25 Audio consumption in Aragonese



Despite the fact that music tends to appeal more to young audiences and young age groups are the ones who usually own more music, there were as many as 71.4% of those belonging to the 18-25 age group that did not have any music in Aragonese at home, and only three in four opted for the answer “a few”. However, this figure related to music and this age group is much larger than the ones related to books or printed media. Conversely, the level of education was not as significant for the answers to the Question 48 as it had been for the consumption of magazines, since as many as 42.8% of those who had completed their University education owned a few CDs, LPs or cassettes in Aragonese. Owning music in Aragonese was not always linked to the identity of feeling Aragonese as could have been expected, seeing that those who stated not to have any music in Aragonese, had claimed to feel Aragonese above all or firstly Aragonese in a proportion of 15.8%, a figure quite close to the 29% who had claimed to feel Spanish above all or firstly Spanish. On the other hand, as many as 68% who had chosen the option “a few” had answered that they felt Aragonese above all or firstly Aragonese, probably representing

part of the contingency of Aragonese people who felt a strong sentiment of Aragonese-ness and expressed their connection by purchasing music in the Aragonese language.

As mentioned earlier, one does not need to understand the lyrics to own music in the language, a typical example was one participant who claimed to have more or less half of all her music in Aragonese despite the fact that she had earlier stated that she did not understand Aragonese, conversely, the music may not have been hers, and belonged to somebody who lived with her, since the question posed had been how many CDs, LPs or cassettes do you have at home? Not, how many are yours? For the rest of the participants who had music at home, they had stated previously that they understood the language. Politically speaking, as expected, the totality of the voters for the regionalist party PAR and 80% of CHA voters had music at home in Aragonese. Nevertheless not having books nor music in Aragonese at home seemed to be linked to a high degree, with a high percentage of people (76.3%) who did not purchase the books and would not purchase music in the language either. Their receptivity levels thus seemed to be uniformly distributed. Fortunately some of them still seemed to be interested enough to delve into the realms of Aragonese.

When comparing the questionnaire done in Ayerbe to the sociolinguistic questionnaire completed in Huesca, the similar question posed to its participants in Huesca: “¿Posees cintas de música con canciones en aragonés?” did not entirely achieve the same results. In contrast to the situation with the books where 48.6% of participants in Ayerbe had had books at home, against 44.3% who owned books in Huesca, the figures were reversed and whereas there were 44.8% in Ayerbe who owned music in Aragonese, 53.7% had music

in Huesca⁴⁰. This may have to do with the bigger size of Huesca and therefore the greater cultural and musical opportunities available to its inhabitants through concerts, recitals, etc. When people are familiar with the music of a group, there is a higher possibility of them buying their products.

When music becomes popular outside its regional or even national borders⁴¹ it tends to help the cultural self-confidence that is needed in the world of cultural revival, that has been the case with the success abroad of Irish music groups⁴², and it could help in Aragon, since the answers in the questionnaires in Huesca for reasons as to why participants would buy music in Aragonese were: “ para conocer mejor la cultura de Aragón”, “para que no se pierda” or “porque es mi tierra” and they even ventured into the linguistic sphere: “para fomentar el uso de la lengua”.⁴³

⁴⁰ Gallmüller, p. 323.

⁴¹ Mallacan did a tour in Japan not that long ago.

⁴² John Ardagh, *Ireland and the Irish: Portrait of a changing society* (London: Penguin books, 1995), p. 304.

⁴³ Gallmüller, p. 323.

6.3 Conclusions

Despite the limited offer of books, printed media and music in Aragonese compared to the other minority or minorised⁴⁴ languages in Spain the results are relatively positive.

Those who did not have books nor read magazines or newspapers belonged to the younger generations or to those with a higher level of education, once again associating the Aragonese language to the older generations and those with a lower level of education. However those very same groups expressed their connection to Aragonese by purchasing music in the language, with as many as half of those who had completed their University studies owning that type of music.

Participants showed their association with the language mostly by buying books and just over half of them by listening to music, whereas reading printed media was not that popular, with only under a third of them reading magazines or papers in Aragonese. However since there are much fewer printed media publications in Aragonese than the comparable production of books and music, having almost a third of participants who read papers and magazines in Aragonese was quite a positive figure.

Those who had most of their books in Aragonese could read the language, but not everybody who could read it had books in Aragonese and although almost half of those

⁴⁴ *Minorized* is a coinage used by some people “who wish to convey the fact that the language in question is not intrinsically *minor* but has been put in a minority position as a result of linguistic oppression” in O’Reilly, p. 28.

who could read did not read magazines in Aragonese either, figures changed considerably when related to music ownership.

The way that people expressed their Aragonese identity was by buying some music in the language, and although just over half of those who felt Aragonese read its printed media, it was really those who owned most of their books in the language who felt truly Aragonese. Besides, despite the fact that only half the participants had books in Aragonese and most only had a few, the situation in Ayerbe looked a lot healthier than in other parts of Aragon and healthier still than that found in other minority languages like Asturian.

7. Normalisation and normativisation of Aragonese

After having analysed the linguistic consumption of Ayerbe's inhabitants in the previous chapter, we venture onto the realms of normalisation and normativisation of the Aragonese language and the participants awareness, knowledge and attitudes towards Aragonés común are analysed (Q 34-41), their familiarity with institutions that promote Aragonese is determined (Q 45 & 46), followed by their opinion on the normalisation of toponymy (Q 28).

The term normalisation has been mostly used in the Iberian Peninsula, mainly in the Catalan and Basque sociolinguistic literature, to describe the return to a more 'normal' use in society, with the language being recognised officially and its use being promoted¹. In fact, this promotion would be carried out by the self-governing regions and all the present language legislation in Spain and its regions² currently refers to linguistic normalisation³. However, before the Aragonese language can be fully normalised there is a need to fully establish the rules for the language and attain a clearly defined standard or prestige variety.

¹ Fishman, *Reversing Language Shift*, pp. 150-54, 182.

² See (Artículo 15) "La normalización lingüística en Cataluña, pues, queda no sólo definida, sino encomendada a una acción de la Generalitat que aplique todo el impulso político para adoptar las medidas y crear las condiciones que garanticen dicha normalización" in José María Abad Licerias and Encarna Carmona Cuenca, 'Leyes de normalización y política lingüística' in *Anotadas con jurisprudencia y legislación Serie "Recopilación Legal" n°2* (Madrid: Universidad Europea – CEES Ediciones, 1999), p. 56.

³ Mar-Molinero, *The Spanish speaking world*, p. 132.

The process of language standardisation according to Leith and Graddol⁴ comprises four main aspects: selection, codification, elaboration⁵ and implementation. Aragonese needs, to a greater or lesser extent, to develop all of them. However, the Aragonese language normativisation⁶ process has lately experienced some extra challenges to achieve a normative equilibrium due to an ongoing sociolinguistic debate. Both, the Consello d'a Fabla Aragonesa and l'Academia de l'Aragonés have so far made some efforts towards the standardisation of the Aragonese language but this has not been done collaboratively.

One of the most serious problems that will have to be overcome in the attempts to standardise Aragonese will be its dialectal fragmentation, although most of the dialectal peculiarities are mainly related to language contact. However, there is yet one more important issue linked to the current lack of an Aragonese normativisation: politics; since some would say that in Aragonese attempts and failures to standardise have been highly politicised.

Since every process of linguistic recuperation requires a normalisation process, a matter that in Aragon always stirs conflicts and tensions, it is necessary to overcome social problems in order to overcome the linguistic ones⁷. It would be preferable to avoid a repetition of the Galician situation, where despite having been official for well over twenty five years and having a wide presence in education and in the media, there are still

⁴ Dick Leith and David Gradol, 'Modernity and English as a national language' in *English History, Diversity and Change* ed. by David Gradol, Dick Leith, and Joan Swann (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 139.

⁵ For the language to be able to be used for all the different social situations.

⁶ "the conscious manipulation of the linguistic corpus in order to create, reform or restructure a particular language" in Beswick, p. 78.

⁷ Llera Ramo, p. 73.

disputes amongst those in favour of a normative closer to Castilian Spanish and those who would prefer a tendency towards the Portuguese standard.

That is why it was essential to ask participants about “Aragonés común” or standard Aragonese.

7.1. “Aragonés Común” (Q 34-41)

Muljačić groups Romance *idioms*⁸ that aspire to a change in their status, and Aragonese appears in his classification in group C which are *idioms* in process of standardisation, together with Occitan, Asturian and Friulan among others⁹. Part of this process of standardisation was the conception of “Aragonés común” or standard Aragonese, previously also called “Aragonese unificado”. By trying to establish an Aragonés común, the aim was to stop its demise by promoting the written form, following the ideological arguments of David Crystal who claims that: “An endangered language will progress if its speakers can write their language down”¹⁰, although ironically, that very standardisation process where there was a need to select one dialect over the others¹¹, may have ended up in hindsight being a factor that could lead to the loss of that diversity the process was designed to safeguard¹².

⁸ He uses the neutral term *idiom* in order to refer to languages and would-be languages.

⁹ Žarco Muljačić, ‘Standardisation in Romance’ in *Bilingualism and Linguistic Conflict in Romance Trends in Romance Linguistics and Philology Vol. 5*, ed. by Rebecca Posner, and John N. Green, (New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1993), pp. 86-8.

¹⁰ Crystal, *Language Death*, p. 138.

¹¹ Which was loosely done, but it has since had pressure to be partly reversed.

¹² Crystal, *Language Death*, p. 140.

The Aragonés común process¹³ started in the late 1960's and the first two published books in standard Aragonese expressed their affinity in their prologues, Nagore mentions: “o mío aragonés no ye de dengún lugar: quio icir que no ye cheso u ansotano, belsetano, ayerbense, do Sobrarbe, u do baixo Aragón. No, no ye de dengún d'ixos sitios, ni tampoco no de una bal o de un puablo sólo. Ye de toz (...) y ye totalmén necesario fer un esfuerso ta crear un cuerpo de fabla chuñida, integrar os restos y fablas locales, ta que a luenga aragonesa siga de más amplitú”¹⁴ and Conte concurs: “A fabla que escribo ye un resumen d'as distintas formas, porque creigo qu'as diferencias son muy poquetas y o camín a seguir ye unificalas, como antis s'ha feito con toz os idiomas”¹⁵ thus setting the tone for the anticipated opposition.¹⁶ Like many other minority languages¹⁷ it proceeded to establish an agreement of the spelling norms which for general ideological reasons were distanced from the Catalan spelling¹⁸ thus dealing with the social fabric instead of maintaining the language by dealing with the language alone.¹⁹ The spelling process culminated in the first Congreso ta ra normalizazion de l'Aragonés and the codification of further grammatical issues was reserved for future conferences. Despite the fact that consequently, in the process of normalisation of grammatical aspects the intention was to

¹³ The first few efforts to unify the Aragonese dialects began in the late 1960's.

¹⁴ Francho Nagore Laín, *Sospiros de l'aire* (Zaragoza: Tipo Línea, 1971).

¹⁵ Anchel Conte, *No deixez morir a mia voz* (Barcelona: El Bardo, 1972).

¹⁶ From the Spanish nationalist in the University of Zaragoza in Artur Quintana 'Chenesis y carauteristicas de l'aragonés común' in *Autas d'a I trobada de estudios y rechiras arredol d'a luenga aragonesa y a suya literatura*, ed. by Francho Nagore Laín, Francho Rodés Orquín, and Chesús Vázquez Obrador, (Huesca: IEA & CFA, 1999), pp. 31-42, p. 31.

¹⁷ Like Occitan.

¹⁸ Quintana, 'Chenesis y carauteristicas de l'aragonés común', p. 32.

¹⁹ Edwards, *Language, Society and Identity*, p. 84.

put into practice a process of progressive acceptance without imposing any norms by decree²⁰, opposition was bound to arise.

Part of the difficulties attached to any standardisation process are the ever-present linguistic groups that do not fully identify with the choices made and since in order for any language revival process to succeed, there has to be a language with which a community identifies its revival efforts, it is paramount to keep everyone on board. In future conferences there was an accusation of lack of balance between the Aragonese used in the valleys and the one used in the cities and the lack of communicative fluidity²¹. Moreover this happened despite the fact that standard Aragonese was aimed to be a literary standard language that “no debe sustituyir a ras bariedaz locals y comarcals, sino, por o contrario, emparar-las, enriqueir-las y dinamizar-las”²², like in the Basque country, where many of the dialectal forms of Euskera Batua are still used in conversation. It is therefore clear that Aragonese language researchers do not agree with Fishman’s claim that when no standard can be agreed upon, it is a complicating factor, but it is not the end of the world since there are many languages that do not follow one particular standard²³.

²⁰ “un prozesu d’azeutazi3n pregresiba d’unas normas comuns en os aspectos morfosintauticos tienen una gran importanzia (...) no se trata d’imposar unas normas por decreto, sino de que se baigan espardindo – y azeutando – poquet a poquet.” in Franchu Nagore Laín, ‘O proceso de normalizaci3n de l’aragon3s’ in *Autas d’o XVIII Congreso de luengas menazatas y normalizaci3n* Association Internationale pour la D3fense des Langues et Cultures Menac3es ed. by Franchu Nagore Laín, and Pilar Puig L3pez (Huesca: CFA, 1999), pp. 45-52, p. 47.

²¹ Chus3 Ra3l Us3n and Chabier Tom3s Arias, ‘Bellas considerazi3ns sobre criterios en a estandarizaci3n de l’aragon3s’ in *Autas d’a III trobada de estudios y rechiras arredol d’a luenga aragonesa y a suya literatura*, ed. by Franchu Nagore Laín, Franchu Rod3s Orquín, and Chesus V3zquez Obrador, (Huesca: IEA & CFA, 2004), pp. 435-60, p. 455.

²² Nagore Laín, ‘O proceso de normalizaci3n de l’aragon3s’, p. 50.

²³ Fishman, *Reversing Language Shift*, p. 344.

Some nationalists like Arnal Purroy go even further and claim that there should not be a standard Aragonese: “Es difícil imaginar que el aragonés unificado pudiera convertirse en modelo normativo para los verdaderos hablantes de las variedades aragonesas, sencillamente porque (...) ya disponen del español como norma culta”.²⁴ This ill-founded attack on minority languages²⁵ like Aragonese has been contended with before. May describes this type of attitude as linguistic social Darwinism where only those languages that have the greatest communicative currency are supposed to survive. Since all the modern major languages that exist today in the world have undergone at some point a process of communicative expansion²⁶ comparable to the one some minority languages like Aragonese are going through at the present time, it seems to me that this defence as to whether a language should die or not, is based on a political rather than a linguistic standpoint.²⁷ Thus from a political point of view, we can ask ourselves why do we have to have a standard language and why should not people just do whatever they want with their language? Schiffman²⁸ replies sagely that whether there are or there are not explicit language policies, there are always going to be implicit policies, that is, there will always be cultural assumptions about language, correctness, about which is the best way to write or to talk, and even if there is no explicit policy, these assumptions will constitute the implicit policy. In actual fact, there is no such thing as not having a language policy- there is always a policy whether it is explicit or not. This is particularly true in the case of

²⁴ María Luisa Arnal Purroy, ‘El aragonés patrimonial y el aragonés común. Examen de una vieja cuestión a la luz de la reciente Ley de Lenguas de Aragón’ <<http://ifc.dpz.es/recursos/publicaciones/29/95/08arnal.pdf>> [accessed 17 April 2011].

²⁵ John Edwards, *Language, Society and Identity*, p. 289-291.

²⁶ Penny gives an example of the four-stage model of language standardisation that Spanish has gone through, in Ralph Penny, *Variation and Change in Spanish* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 194- 206.

²⁷ May, *Language and Minority Rights*, pp. 147-48.

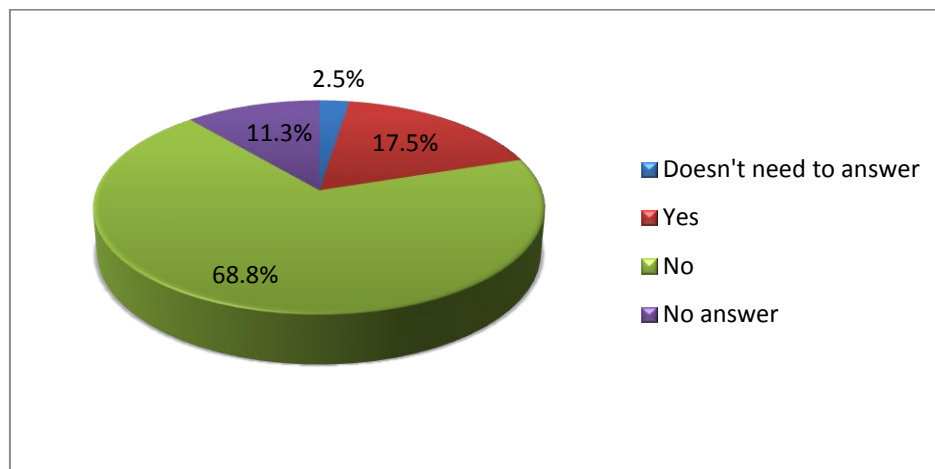
²⁸ Schiffman, p. 148.

Aragonese, where not striving to achieve a standard language would allow it to deteriorate so much that it would be a blatant case of implicit policy.

All the participants were asked about their awareness of the existence of standard Aragonese (Q 34), subsequently those who were not aware of its existence were asked whether they would like it to exist (Q 36) and those who were familiar with it, were asked about their opinion about it (Q 35), their reading (Q 37) writing (Q 38) and speaking (Q 39) abilities on it, followed by their identification with it (Q 40) and their preferences on its promotion (Q 41).

When asked whether they had ever heard of “Aragonés común” or “Aragonés unificado” as it is also known (Q. 34), just under seven in ten had not heard of it as can be seen in Graph 26 and a further 13.8% had not answered the question. They almost certainly did not answer because they probably had not heard of it, or because they were not sure of what it was. Only 17.5% of those interviewed responded affirmatively which shows that there is still a lot of work to do when it comes to the normalisation of the language.

Graph 26 Have you heard of “aragonés común”?



Over a quarter (26.6%) of those belonging to the 18-26 age group knew about standard Aragonese. This means that younger people, who are usually not too involved with the Aragonese language as we have seen earlier on in this questionnaire, were familiar with the standardisation efforts. The older the participants, the less aware they were of the existence of standard Aragonese, therefore showing that although the awareness campaigns may have worked with the younger sectors of the population, it is the older ones who need to be approached in future. The majority of those who knew about “Aragonés común” were those who had voted for a regionalist political party like PAR or CHA (42.8%) which would have been the parties that disseminate that kind of information among their voters. However, there were still many voters of those parties who were not familiar with it, making the awareness of this variety more linked to linguistic environments than to political ones.

The differences between the written standard and the oral language tend to be one of the arguments more frequently used against the linguistic normalisation of any minority

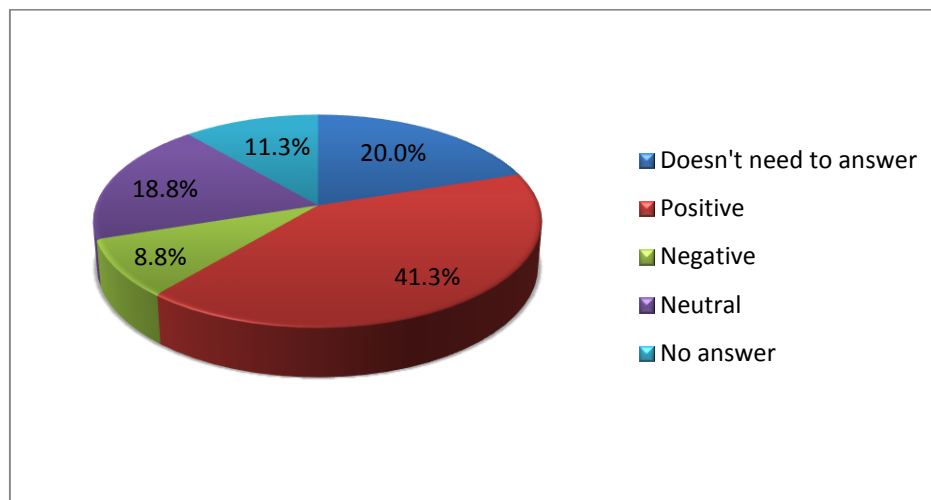
language. However, a truly central aspect in any process of linguistic recuperation is the will of the speakers. Any public linguistic policy is bound to fail if it does not count with enough social support to back it up, and in particular, any linguistic policy will be doomed if the users of that language are not willing to support it.

“Cultures with oral traditions may (...) see written language as an attempt to control them, or as corrupting to language”²⁹ according to Schiffman. This may well have been the situation with Aragonese which for centuries had a limited written tradition, thus diminishing the esteem for the written text and whose language survived thanks to the wealth of oral interactions.

Only those participants who had replied negatively to Question 34 were then asked a further question regarding standardisation of Aragonese (Q 36). They were firstly primed by reminding them that in Alto Aragon there were some ways of speaking different to Castilian Spanish and they were then asked what would they think of a common written Aragonese language used as a referent for all of them? The choice of answers was either positive, negative or it did not matter. The results can be seen in Graph 27.

²⁹ Schiffman, p. 10.

Graph 27 Opinion on a common written Aragonese language



Just over half of the participants who had to answer this question (51.5%) replied that the initiative was something positive against one in ten who thought it was negative and 23.5% who were not concerned with whether it existed or not. This high percentage of indifference together with those 14%, who did not answer, makes a third of those who had to answer this question and who almost certainly would need more information before venturing to make a statement related to the standardisation of Aragonese. This means that once the standardisation process is properly operational, there will probably be a need for an awareness campaign.

Again, it was the younger age groups that answered more positively, with 55.5% of those belonging to the 18-35 age groups confirming that they would like a written standard Aragonese, against 11.1% who disapproved. Generally, the older the age groups the more negative and indifferent the participants were, apart from the 56-65 age group who were positive. When correlating the Aragonese identity of the participants and their support for the standard written form approximately seven in ten of those who felt Aragonese above

all or firstly Aragonese though of it positively, thus probably linking their regional and linguistic identities. It was however telling to discover a close correlation between those who felt as Spanish as Aragonese and who felt indifferent about standardisation.

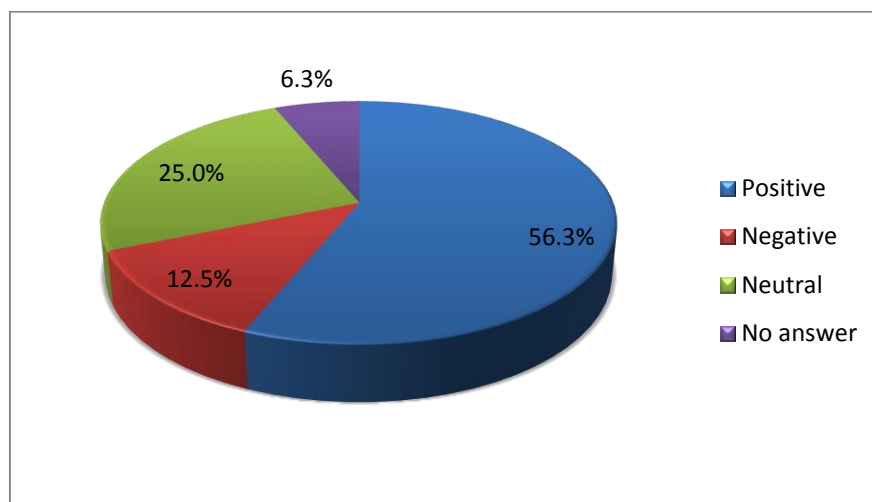
Those who were aware of the existence of “Aragonés común” were subsequently asked their opinion about it (Q 35) using the same parameters for the answers as for those who were not familiar with it.

One of the dangers of standardisation is the failure to appeal to the cultural identity of the speakers³⁰, thus if the percentage of negative answers had been high on this question, one possibility could have been that the speakers did not identify “Aragonés común” with the variety they spoke. Except that was obviously not the case, as will become apparent later on with the answers to Question 40.

As can be seen in Graph 28, standard Aragonese generally obtained a positive response, although there was a very high percentage of those who were indifferent about the existence of a standard Aragonese, the reason may have been that they themselves did not speak Aragonese and therefore were not too involved in the issue. However, they did not think negatively of it.

³⁰ Carla Amorós Negre, *Norma y estandarización* (Salamanca: Luso – Española de Ediciones, 2008), p. 162.

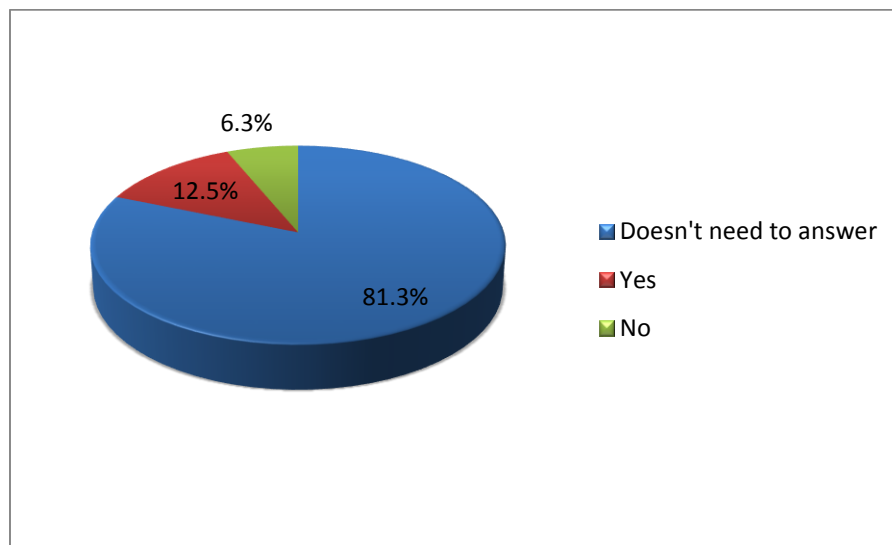
Graph 28 What do you think of “aragonés común”?



Propitiously all of the participants who belonged to the younger age groups thought positively of standard Aragonese. This is a positive result as they may start learning it if they favour it. The most salient feature regarding the education level of participants was that 80% of those who had completed their primary education thought positively of standard Aragonese whereas the rest of the participants represented small percentages in all the other categories. When correlating the answers to this question and whether the participants identified their local variety with standard Aragonese the results showed that the totality of those who thought positively of it, had also identified it, either completely or partially with their local variety of Aragonese. Conversely, the very small percentage who thought negatively of it (12.5%), identified it with their variety either partially or not at all. Only 28.5% of those who had answered previously that there was no other linguistic variety in Ayerbe were not fond of standard Aragonese, whereas as many as 77.7% of those who had chosen the answer “positive” in this question had admitted that Aragonese existed in Ayerbe therefore in some way associating the variety used in Ayerbe with “Aragonés común”.

Those who had answered that they had heard of standard Aragonese in Question 34 were subsequently asked whether they could read it (Q 37), write it (Q 38) or speak it (Q 39). The results can be seen in the three graphs below.

Graph 29 Have you read texts in “aragonés común”?

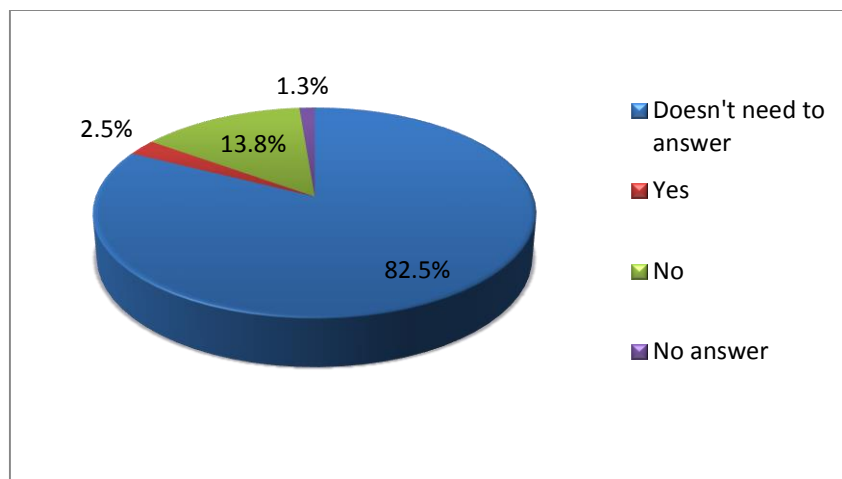


The majority of those who had to answer the question, 71.4% had read texts written in standard Aragonese. It is worth noting at this point that the articles written in the magazine “Comarca” in Ayerbe, are written in standard Aragonese, therefore, as well as the fact that most written text produced are in standard Aragonese, there may also be a connection between the high percentage of people who can read standard Aragonese and the magazines published in Ayerbe.

Those who had not read texts in standard Aragonese belonged mostly to the younger age groups showing some need for literacy in the younger generations. The totality of those who had completed their primary education had read in “Aragonés común” as well as 75%

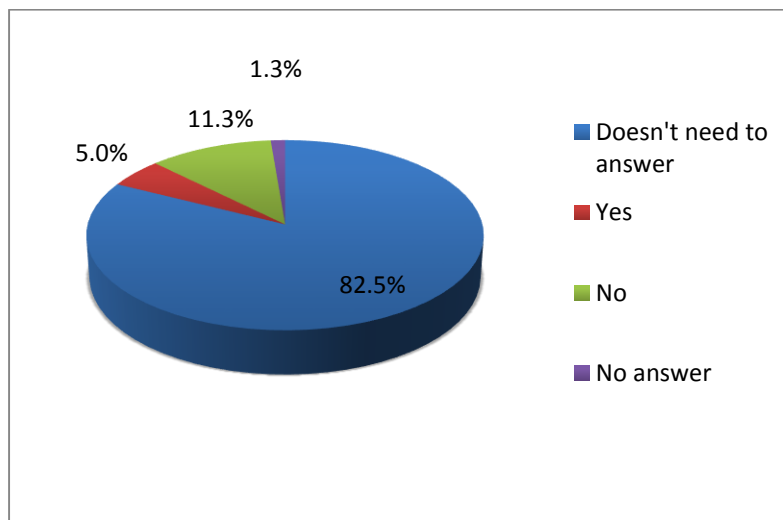
who had completed their University education. Regarding the political party voted, there was a clear association between political identity and the ability to read in standard Aragonese, since those who had the ability to read it, had mostly voted for the regionalist parties which would have endorsed it like CHA and PAR. In addition, it was revealing to know that when correlating those who could read standard Aragonese with those who had claimed to be able to read Aragonese earlier there was a one hundred per cent match.

Graph 30 Have you written texts in “Aragonés común”?



The very small percentage of participants who could write in standard Aragonese, were exactly the same ones who had claimed to be able to write in Aragonese in Question 19, who voted for regionalist parties and who not only felt Aragonese above all but also as much Spanish as Aragonese, thus showing that not only those who had a strong Aragonese identity could write in the language.

Graph 31 Do you speak “aragonés común”?



There was a somewhat higher percentage of participants (28.5%) who could speak standard Aragonese when compared with the percentage of those who could write it. A large proportion of those who could not speak “Aragonés común” (33.3%) belonged to the 18-25 year group, demonstrating again the younger generations as the ones that lack the knowledge. The most surprising data was to discover that as many as 33% who did not speak standard Aragonese, had claimed earlier that they could speak Aragonese. Sometimes this type of answer reflects a lack of information, in this case it could have been the insecurity of not really knowing if what one speaks is always standard Aragonese or not.

Those who were aware of standard Aragonese were also asked whether they identified it with their local variety (Q 40). They could choose to reply that they identified it fully, partially, slightly or that they did not identify it at all. A standard Aragonese is needed to ensure the survival of the local varieties since it has the potential to serve as the reference

variety, the educated norm for all of them. However, an ideal standard Aragonese would not exclude the linguistic attitudes of the speakers of all the different varieties. This in itself poses problems, first of all with the spelling chosen to represent them all. Although Cornish with barely one thousand speakers has found its way into schools, signage and administration with official backing, the current situation of Aragonese has many similarities with the Cornish one on the difficulties of selecting one particular chosen written form that everybody would apply and respect. The spelling system originally used in Cornwall has been ousted by three different variants. In Aragon, the system followed since 1987 has already been spurned twice³¹ and with the formation of the “Academia de la lengua aragonesa” it will happen at least once more³². As in Cornish, people are strongly attached to their systems and for every new system, there is one that is potentially right against one that is potentially wrong, therefore failing in the rekindling of the language and reaching a stand still because of disagreements amongst the kindlers.³³ Standard Aragonese was set to follow the parameters that would make it have “capazidá d'autazón y flesibilida, ta poder azeutar barians locals, más que más en o bocabulario. Anque no tan amplamén en morfloxía y sintasis”³⁴ but it will be Ayerbe’s inhabitants who would have to decide.

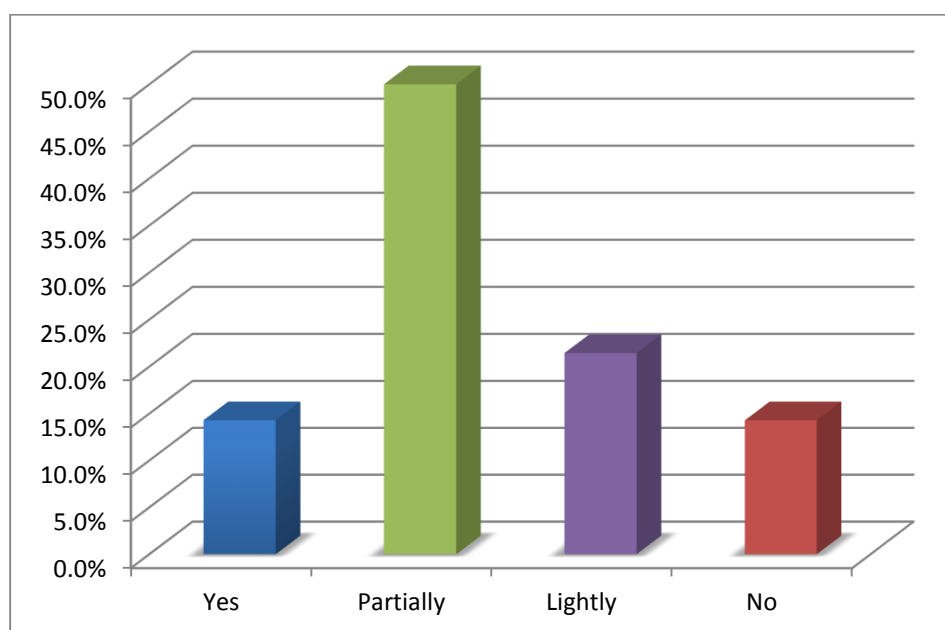
³¹ José Ignacio López Susín and José Luis Soro Domingo, Estatuto Jurídico de las Lenguas Propias de Aragón: La Ley 10/2009, de 22 de diciembre, (Zaragoza: Justicia de Aragón, 2010), p.42.

³² López Susín and Soro Domingo, p.69.

³³ Miquel Strubell, ‘A standard Cornish language?’ Dirección General de Euskera de la Diputación Foral de Gipuzkoa. (2007). <<http://www.gipuzkoaeskara.net/albisteak/1188896919>> [accessed 16 April 2011].

³⁴ Nagore Laín, ‘O proceso de normalización de l’aragonés’, p. 49.

Graph 32 Identification of standard Aragonese with local variety



As can be seen in Graph 32, the majority (85.7%) of those who had to answer this question agreed that standard Aragonese could be identified with their local variety, to a greater or lesser extent. Although only 14.2% claimed that it could be identified completely, with most of the respondents (50%) settling on the partiality of the identification.

All the participants who answered affirmatively to this question felt first Aragonese and then Spanish, nonetheless, as many as 50% of those who answered negatively claimed to feel Aragonese above all. In this case regional identity was not linked with the agreement of linguistic normalisation. Nor was it linked with the choice of political party voted, since a third of those who voted for the regionalist party PAR, had not identified standard Aragonese and Ayerbe's local variety. However, the majority (87.5%) of those who had claimed that there was another linguistic variety in Ayerbe, agreed either partially or

totally that standard Aragonese could be identified with their local variety, therefore linking them.

All of the participants were then asked about the standardisation process of Aragonese (Q 41). Again, they were first placed in context by making them think about written and spoken Aragonese used in books and in the media as well as in teaching at schools. Subsequently they were asked whether they thought that it was convenient to use a standard Aragonese there as has been done with other languages. The answers they could choose varied from a straight forward affirmation to a possibility of not doing anything and leaving all the variants as they are.

Should the variants be left alone, it would mean not implementing any language policy and as Fishman admits, “Even the much vaunted ‘no language policy’ of many democracies is, in reality, an anti-minority-languages policy, because it delegitimises such languages by studiously ignoring them, and thereby, not allowing them to be placed on the agenda of supportable general values”³⁵ therefore leaving the variants as they are would be equivalent to having an anti-Aragonese policy.

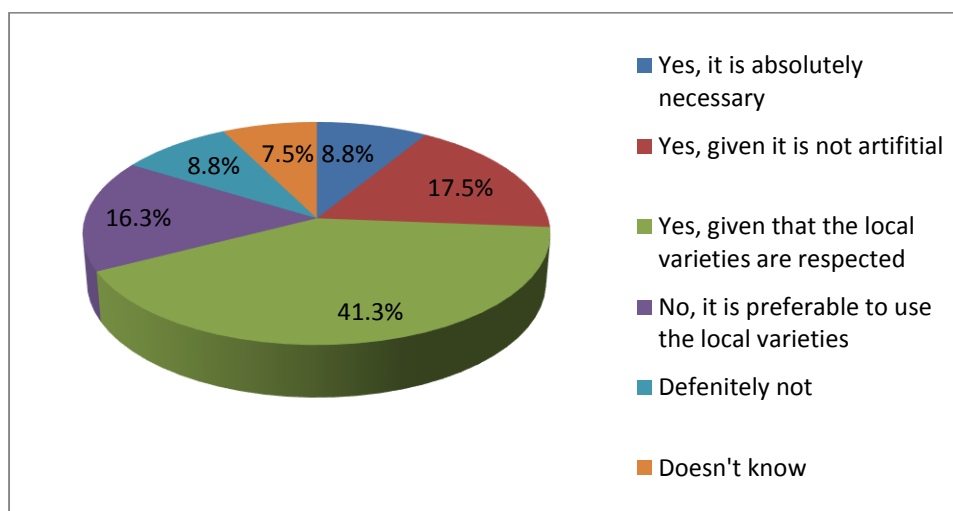
In order for standard Aragonese to be used in the media, books and in schools there is a need as Nagore supports for “un prozesu social – un mobimientu sozial- y como consecuencia una entrebenzion pulitica que fazilite o camín (...) y baiga aduyando por meyo d’aizions puliticas y midas lexislatibas”³⁶ similar to what has happened with

³⁵ Fishman, in Romaine, p. 246.

³⁶ Nagore Laín, ‘O proceso de normalización de l’aragonés’, p. 45.

Asturian, where they have achieved, in terms of educational legislation, to take as an example, “The use and promotion of Asturian Act of 1998”, which is a law that established Asturian “as the traditional language of Asturias, guarantees the juridical validity of the use of Asturian by institutions dependent on the Autonomous Government and establishes Asturian education at all levels”³⁷. That is the kind of support that other languages have and that the Aragonese language needs. That is institutional protection and recognition like what has happened to Galician, Catalan, Euskera and also Asturian.

Graph 33 Need for a standard Aragonese



The answers are approximately distributed amongst the five different possibilities that were put forward. The possibility that achieved the most support is the option where the standardisation of Aragonese would be successful if the different variants were respected (41.2%) followed by an ideal standard that does not sound too artificial (17.5%), but in general terms, the majority of those interviewed (67.5%) defend the need for a standard

³⁷ The Asturian language in education in Spain in Mercator — European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning <<http://www.mercator-research.eu/>> [accessed 20 April 2011].

Aragonese. That desire, however, comes with some opposition, those who do not see a need for it at all (8.8%) and those who would prefer to leave each variable as they are (16.2%). These answers show that any process of standardisation that is implemented should take careful consideration of the different variants to avoid the danger of linguistic exclusion.

When considering the political party voted for and correlating it to the desire for standardisation, as anticipated the results were somewhat revealing. Those who had voted for a regionalist party were the ones predominantly in favour of standardisation. The totality of those who voted for CHA were supportive of a standardisation process, and only one in ten of PAR voted did not want it. However, even those who voted for the main political parties seemed to want the process, since only 21.1% of PP voters and 17.6% of PSOE voters had chosen the negative options. The general support for standardisation was specially shown among those who had claimed that there was another linguistic variety in Ayerbe (67.5%) and also by those who did not think there was one (66.6%). They obviously endorsed the support for all the variants, even if according to them they were not used locally, to be standardised so that they would not be lost.

7.2. Institutional work (Q 45 & 46)

The awareness of the participants regarding institutions that promote the Aragonese language was assessed next, firstly by enquiring about the knowledge of any institution that would back it (Q 45) and then by providing a list of them from which they had to identify the ones they knew (Q 46).

There have been several academics and supporters of the Aragonese language³⁸ who, through the decades, have called for more involvement from the Aragonese institutions, although in the end, it has very often been the several associations, groups and individual political parties that have carried the weight of fighting for the survival of Aragonese. This has lead a large part of the population to believe that the Aragonese language is very politicised; however as it has been seen in this study that is not always the case.

One of the things that has been requested of the institutions through the years is a linguistic question on the ten yearly census, but to no avail. Aragon is not alone in this situation, as in other countries like Greece it has been impossible to know how multilingual it is, because no census has included a linguistic question since 1951³⁹. In Aragon, at least, it is only since the mid eighties that the question has not been included, although since then there have been some individual village councils that have done so independently among their citizens⁴⁰. One of the reasons for the sidelining may be that Aragonese is clearly not part of a sovereign nation similarly to Friulian or Breton, or even part of one that shows particular nationalistic strains. Countries like Belgium or Switzerland are bilingual or multilingual, but these are the daily languages that are used in

³⁸ The “Consello Cheneral u Asesor de l’Aragonés- tenerba que tener refirme ofizial (d’a Diputación Provinvial de Huesca, d’a diputación General de Aragón...) y creigo que ye o inte de constituyir-lo porque solameén con a suya aduya poderban lebar enta os suyos quefers os órganos almenistratibos que se creyen en a Diputación General de Aragón [D.G.A., seguntes as siglas, que ye o gobierno Autonomo d’Aragón] ta meter en prautica a política lingüística. Nagore Laín, ‘O proceso de normalización de l’aragonés’, p. 50.

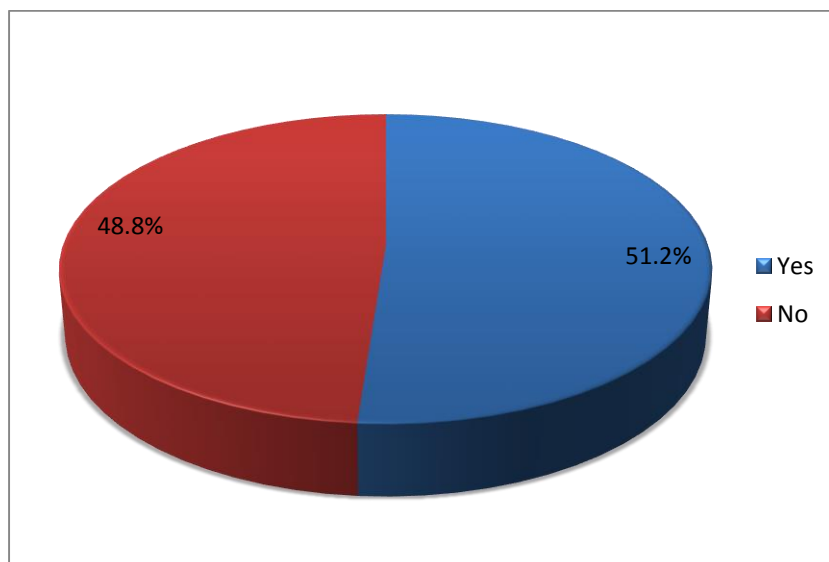
³⁹ Trudgill, *Sociolinguistic Variation and Change*, p. 129.

⁴⁰ Censo lingüístico de Monzón in Nagore Lain, ‘Análís y comentario de bels datos d’o Zenso Lingüístico de Monzón de 1997’.

substantial regions of these countries, whereas in Aragon, like in the Gaeltacht in Ireland, language is often seen as a political weapon⁴¹.

When participants were asked whether they knew of any institution either private or state managed which promoted the Aragonese language either locally or regionally, the responses were almost equally divided, although there were a few more interviewees who answered positively as can be seen in Graph 34. It is well known that in general, public opinion does not fully believe that institutions would take the necessary measures for the responsibility of institutional protection of the language; this sometimes realistic view may be connected to the lack of appreciation towards the institutions from the public, who do not really acknowledge their actions regarding linguistic issues.

Graph 34 Knowledge of institutions that promote Aragonese



⁴¹ Ardagh, p. 303.

Quite a few participants had claimed earlier that they wanted an increase in the amount of devolved powers, and a sizeable amount (46.3%) of those who had wanted that increase to happen as soon as possible, knew of institutions that promoted the language, thus clearly showing their involvement in politics. It was also most of those who had a University degree (75%) who knew those institutions. On the contrary, as many as 33.3% of CHA voters and 10% of PAR voters, claimed not to know any organisations that promoted Aragonese, despite the fact that the very parties they voted for did so in a direct or indirect way. It seems as if some institutions do not have much success in making people aware of the activities they are involved with, and sometimes they even seem to fail to make them aware of their very existence. Since many of these institutions or organisations are more active in the cities, this could be an explanation for their low visibility.

In the next question (Q 46) there was a list of institutions that had to a greater or lesser extent been involved with the Aragonese language or decisions about it, and those participants who had answered affirmatively to the previous question had to tick the ones with which they were familiar.

Table 16 Institutions identified as promoting the Aragonese language

	Percentage
Does not need to answer	48.8%
Consejería de cultura de Aragón	1.3%
Consello d'a Fbla Aragonesa	18.8%
Ayuntamiento de Ayerbe	2.5%
Partidos nacionalistas y regionalistas	7.5%
Others	1.3%
No answer	20.0%

The results were puzzling for the reason that although the institutions that were recognised as promoters of Aragonese do support and sponsor it, the three that were not recognised do so too; one of them even in more ways than many of the ones that were mentioned. The “Instituto de Estudios Altoaragoneses” regularly collaborates in the publications of many books in and about Aragonese and the “Diputación de Huesca” and the “Comarca de la Hoya de Huesca/Plana de Huesca” were involved with the bilingual campaign for signage. None of them were referred to. It was however significant to see that participants recognised the “Consello d’a Fabla Aragonesa” as the main institution to support the language, because it is definitely one of the ones that are involved the most. However, the percentages would have been more enlightening if all participants had answered the question, since as many as 20% did not answer it and for the “others” answer, there were no details given. There seems to be a lack of information regarding the institutions that are involved with the Aragonese language but also as mentioned before there is a lack of trust that they would be involved. All CHA voters agreed that there were nationalists and regionalists parties that supported Aragonese and certainly those participants who were more involved politically. The vast majority of those who wanted more devolved powers for Aragon, also seemed to be involved with linguistic policies, since 86.7% recognised the Consello d’a Fabla Aragonesa as an organisation who defended the Aragonese language.

7.3. Language used on signs (Q 28)

In order to conclude this section, I am going to analyse a strong symbolic element of the role that a language plays in our daily lives; this is, the naming of the places we see on a

daily basis. Amongst the different aspects of the collective use of a language, its presence in the thoroughfares is less important than its use in teaching or in the administration. However, this is the most visible use and therefore it acquires a symbolic value⁴². It is not the same to see the name of a village on the entrance sign written in Aragonese as in Castilian Spanish. The diglossic separation of what one says and what is written tends to become the normal situation, so much so that it becomes almost unbelievable for speakers to see the way they call a place written down in the vernacular language. Hence the participants were asked, in which language should the name of their village, their street and names given to geographical areas be written on signs.

One very crucial factor for the prestige of a language is to be noticed,⁴³ therefore when people see the toponym signs written in a particular language, they tend to be more aware of its existence, that is why it was so important that at the beginning of this century all the public road signs in the “Plana de Uesca” area were changed to bilingual signs in Castilian Spanish and Aragonese, thus making the Aragonese language names visually more readily available. It is a shame though that some of the signs had spelling mistakes.⁴⁴ This probably was the promoting institution’s fault. This is the kind of reason as we saw in the previous question why people do not always trust institutions on the promotion for the language. In any case, with the new “Ley de Lenguas” there will not be any bilingual signage, as it has been approved that the signs will be in either one language or the other, but not both. As always, the linguistic landscape tends to be related to the official

⁴² Siguán, p. 188.

⁴³ Crystal, *Language Death*, p. 130.

⁴⁴ *Comarca. Asociación Promoción Integral de Ayerbe y Comarca*. Boletín Informativo nº37, April-June 2003, p. 6.

language policy when it comes to minority languages⁴⁵, and unlike in the Basque country where signage as part of the linguistic landscape serves the purpose of revitalising and maintaining the use of Euskera,⁴⁶ in Alto Aragon the new law will not allow that. However, mistakes in the spelling and the very lack of bilingual signage often tempt activists to deface the signs, thus showing the language's presence in the wider community and expressing corporate linguistic identity,⁴⁷ which will probably happen in the areas where the community, or at least part of it, may not agree with the Act.

Figure 4 Incorrect Aragonese spelling in signage



Source: Comarca. Number 37

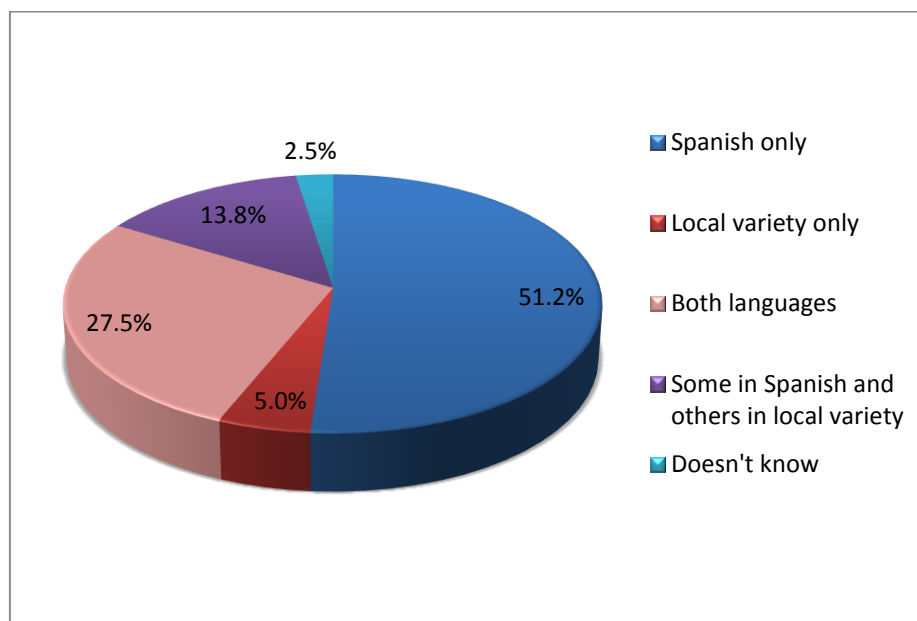
⁴⁵Jasone Cenoz and Durk Gorter, 'El estudio del paisaje lingüístico' Euskara - Gobierno Vasco <http://www.euskara.euskadi.net/r59-bpeduki/es/contenidos/informacion/artik22_1_cenoz_08_03/es_cenoz/artik22_1_cenoz_08_03.html> [accessed 21 April 2011].

⁴⁶ Jasone Cenoz and Durk Gorter, 'Linguistic Landscape and Minority Languages' *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 3, (2006) 1, 67-80, p. 67.

⁴⁷ Crystal, *Language Death*, p. 131.

When answering the question, those who demanded the signage to be exclusively in Aragonese totalled only 5% of those interviewed, thus constituting a marginal option in the public opinion in Ayerbe. However there were 27.5% who would like to break with the monolingual Castilian Spanish tradition that prevails in favour of a real bilingual policy with both languages being shown on the signs. In addition 13.8% would prefer some of the signs to be in Castilian Spanish and some in Aragonese depending on their nature. If we take together those who opted for the bilingual option, plus those who opted for the some in Aragonese and some in Spanish option along with those who wanted all signage to be in Aragonese, there is almost half (46.3%) the people in Ayerbe who would want to see the Aragonese language present on the signs.

Graph 35 Use of Aragonese in signs



The political party voted for would have a major repercussion on the approval or disapproval of the linguistic policy regarding signage, thus, it is indicative to observe the

correlations regarding the votes casted. Those who voted for the main political parties were clear about not wanting the signs written in Aragonese, however, those who voted for the regionalist parties CHA and PAR did not present themselves as wanting only Aragonese written on the signs, but both languages. Considering the local variety present in Ayerbe, as many as 75% of those who believed in its existence wanted the signs to be only written in that local variety thus wanting to share the community's awareness. Revealingly, 61% of those who wanted the signs to be written in Castilian Spanish had claimed earlier that there was no other local variety in use in Ayerbe, therefore, for them there was obviously no need to display it.

7.4. Conclusions

Despite a preponderance of participants who were not familiar with standard Aragonese, there is a majority of those interviewed who consider it on a par with other peninsular languages, Aragonese should be normalised, although there is a significant concern towards the local variants which should have to be taken into account in order not to generate a linguistic exclusion of the actual speakers.

Regarding the effort made by the institutions to protect the Aragonese language, there is a clear level of dissatisfaction amongst public opinion in Ayerbe which tends to value in a negative light what the institutions do, by thinking of it as non memorable. This is, no doubt, due to the fact that, the institutions and organisations devoted to the linguistic promotion and protection of Aragonese are little known or acknowledged and

consequently, the initiatives that are put into action are not too noticeable either, thus reflecting the little dissemination level they have attained.

However the attitudes of people in Ayerbe show certain reservation elements that can be exemplified with the demand for signage in Aragonese, since just over half the population would prefer to maintain the status quo with the signs being written only in Spanish. This could be an example of the confusing situation that subsists in one part of public opinion with respect to linguistic issues.

8. Linguistic expectations and demands

So far the linguistic identity of the speakers together with their linguistic competence and perception has been covered. However, the present and the future of a language relies heavily on the expectations and demands of the population, that is, the individual and collective will of the speakers¹. In this sub-section these two issues will be analysed: the expectations and future of the language in the first part (Q 42 & 43) followed in the second part by the linguistic demands linked with the presence of Aragonese in the media (Q 53 & 54) and in education (Q 44).

8.1. Objectives for the Aragonese language (Q 43)

In Question 43 participants were asked about the official protection of standard Aragonese. This is a truly controversial question since if the Aragonese language were to be made official, there would be many symbolic factors attached to that standpoint that would be added to the political and practical ones. Plus it is not only a question of Aragonese becoming official, what participants are being asked is about the issue of standard Aragonese being officially recognised. If that was to be the case, expert opinion should be taken into account in order to avoid linguistic misrepresentations².

¹ Llera Ramo and San Martín Antuña, *II Estudio sociolingüístico de Asturias*, p. 259.

² In 2009 the “Ley de lenguas” which was supposed to protect and regulate the use of Aragonese was passed. However, Aragonese was not made official as such and the speculation, based on the vagueness of the Act, that the development of a standard Aragonese should start again from scratch was rather intense. Obviously the 2009 legislation is relevant to the discussion of the sections in my questionnaire that relate to the normalisation of Aragonese, but as it postdates my survey it does not have an impact on the analysis.

As with the “Ley de Normalización” in Catalonia designed to “superar la actual desigualdad lingüística impulsando la normalización del uso de la lengua Catalana en todo el territorio de Cataluña”³, so would the “Ley de lenguas” contribute towards an implementation of a linguistic policy in Aragon. The areas in which this policy should be implemented, would depend to a great extent on the geography of the traditional patrimonial use of the language. Additionally, for the language use to be encouraged there would be a need for a standard Aragonese which would need to be protected. That is why participants were asked this question.

Only those who had replied affirmatively to Question 34 (have you ever heard of an “Aragonés común”?) and Question 42, (Would you like Aragonese to be the language of the Alto Aragon area in the future?) needed to answer Question 43, where they were asked about their preference for an official recognition and protection of the “Aragonés común”. The options they could choose as answers were linked to opposing it, supporting it or being indifferent about it. If they supported it, the official situation could be wished to be put in place locally, in their own provincially delimited area, in Alto Aragon or in the whole of Aragon. As a matter of fact, only a small percentage of those interviewed (23.7%) had to answer this question, since it would not have made sense to ask about the official protection of “Aragonés común” in a particular area to those who did not know what standard Aragonese was, or those who were not interested in the Aragonese language being used in Alto Aragon. This may have meant that those who answered this question were already aware of the need to speak Aragonese, although as it can be seen in Graph 36 it was not that clear cut for everybody.

³ Siguán, p. 166.

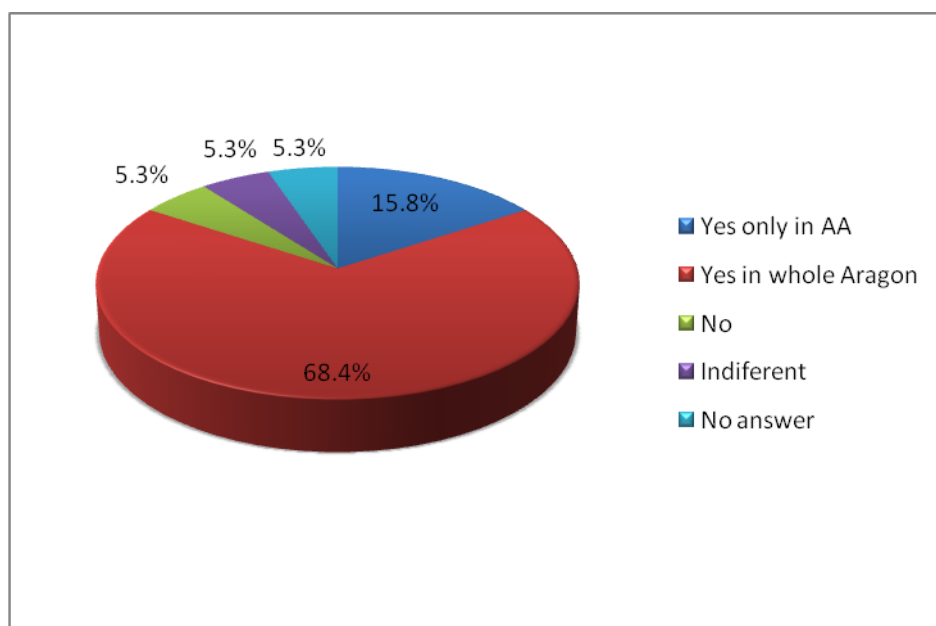
Of those who replied to this question, the majority (84.2%) agreed with the recognition and protection of standard Aragonese. Only (5.3%) replied that it should not be protected, exactly the same figure (5.3%) for those who claimed that they were indifferent to it and the same again (5.3%) for those who did not reply. Nobody chose the option to make it official in their own provincially delimited area or “comarca” as it is known in Spanish. This “comarca” would have been rather small in size, as well as in population and would definitely not embrace villages that belonged to a different province (Zaragoza) and that were mentioned earlier on in the questionnaire as villages where they spoke in a similar way to Ayerbe nor other areas in Alto Aragon where people believe there are more speakers of Aragonese. Most participants (68.4%) decided that standard Aragonese should be official in the whole of Aragon which would be the option that other co-official languages in Spain have followed, apart from Euskera in Navarra where it is only official in the Euskera speaking areas.⁴ The situation in Navarra as in Canada outside Quebec would have been similar to the option preferred by 15.8% of those who answered this question, where the language is only protected in the area where it is used, which in Aragon, apart from the cities and pockets of speakers elsewhere in the region, would be mostly in Alto Aragon.

The outcome was rather remarkable with such a high percentage of participants agreeing on the need for official protection of standard Aragonese, despite the fact that it reflected only the opinions of those who would like Aragonese to be spoken in the Alto Aragon area and of those who were aware of the existence of standard Aragonese. The latter evidently

⁴ Siguán, pp. 254-55.

thought that the standard form they knew would be the appropriate to use as part of the normativised language and these answers could clearly be considered as an incentive to carry on with the process of normalisation.

Graph 36 Official protection of standard Aragonese



Those who preferred standard Aragonese to be officially protected in the whole of Aragon belonged mostly (69.3%) to the younger age groups, 18-35 which together with three fifths of those who had completed their University education, showed that there was a group of younger generations and well educated participants that had an interest in the survival of the language, which is positive for its future. In addition, there was a section of the population who were very active politically, since they wanted the increase of devolved competences to happen as soon as possible and also had strong feelings regarding the Aragonese language. The totality of those who wanted standard Aragonese to be protected in the Alto Aragon area had also wanted the devolvment process to be

swifter. In addition, there were 72.7% who had wanted standard Aragonese to be protected officially in the whole of Aragon and also supported a speedy devolvement. The political party voted for was not a determining factor for the support of the officialdom of standard Aragonese since those who supported for it to happen in the whole of Aragon were equally distributed among all the political parties, thus showing that it was not only those who voted for the regionalist political parties that had a confirmed interest in the language.

Significantly, most of those (69.2%) who had wanted “Aragonés común” to be recognised in the whole of Aragon, had acknowledged earlier that there was a vernacular variety used in Ayerbe. There are obviously still some people who support the survival of Aragonese even if they lack the awareness of being in contact with users. However, this support is still without a doubt a positive aspect of the standardisation process that would help halt the demise of Aragonese. Something similar is being experienced in Ireland, where opinion surveys show that a substantial majority of Irish people would not like the language to die.⁵ By establishing standard Aragonese as the language to be used in the normalisation process, it would be a step towards halting its death too.

There was a questionnaire conducted in Monzon in 1997 by its town council to everybody over the age of 14 and it included a question that was similar to the one asked in Ayerbe: “¿Cree que el aragonés debería ser lengua cooficial en el Alto Aragón?” Although not strictly the same in wording, both questions would have had the same aim, to explore the possibility of Aragonese or standard Aragonese being an official language in Aragon. The results for the questionnaire in Monzon seemed a little low compared to the results for

⁵ Ardagh, p. 302.

other minority languages like Asturias, since only 48.8% of participants answered affirmatively⁶ against 70.3% in Asturias.⁷ However, this can be considered a high proportion when compared to the questionnaire done in Huesca where only 42.2% believed that Aragonese and Castilian Spanish should be co-official in Huesca⁸.

It is also worth pointing out that in the questionnaire done in “La Franja” in Aragon by Martín Zorraquino, when participants were asked about the possibility of Catalan becoming official in the Franja area versus becoming official in the whole of Aragon, only 22.8% of those who had supported Catalan being official had subsequently added that it should be official in the whole of Aragon. The opinion of this relatively small percentage could be interpreted as an awareness of the existence of an Aragonese language that should be co-official with Castilian in Aragon, as opposed to Catalan being official only in the Franja area which was supported by 77.2% of the participants.⁹

It is clear that an accepted and official standard Aragonese would have an influence in the process of normalisation of the language. The success of any process that seeks normalisation and therefore widening of the social space of Aragonese would have to be based on an accepted and officially protected normative standard Aragonese and that is what people in Ayerbe seem to want.

⁶ Nagore Laín, ‘Análisis y comentario de los datos del Zensu Lingüístico de Monzón de 1997’, p. 21.

⁷ Llera Ramo, p. 75.

⁸ The questionnaire completed in Huesca in 2001 asked participants: ¿Consideras importante que en el municipio de Huesca el aragonés fuera declarado lengua oficial, junto con el castellano? in Gallmüller, p. 324.

⁹ María Antonia Martín Zorraquino, María Rosa Fort Cañellas, María Luisa Arnal Purroy, and Javier Giralt Latorre, *Estudio Sociolingüístico de la Franja Oriental de Aragón* (Zaragoza: Universidad de Zaragoza, 1995), p. 67.

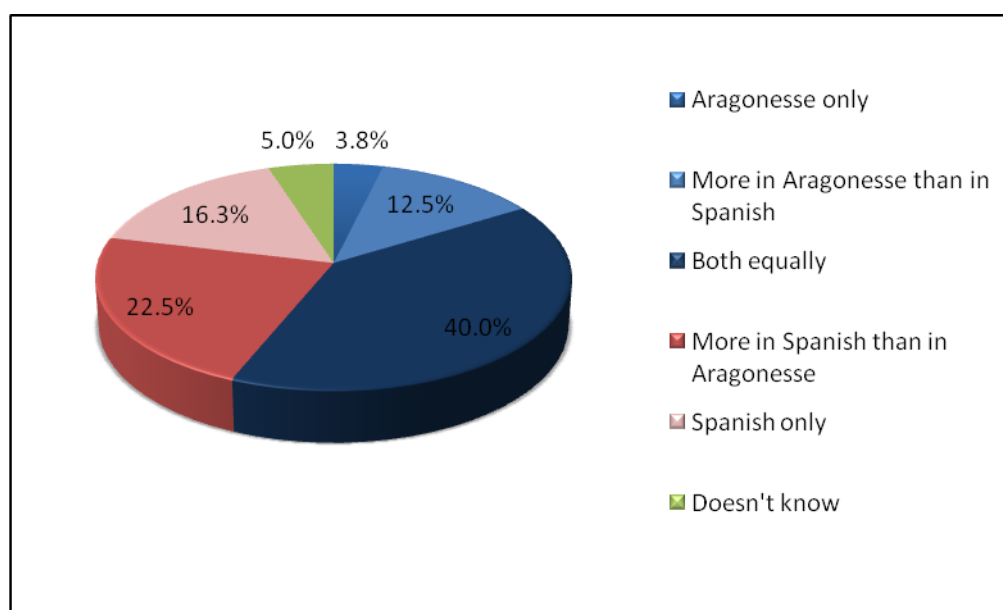
8.2. The future of the language (Q 42)

In the Twenty First century, we tend to associate modernity with mobility and internationalisation, this implies embracing diversity and a flexible identity which may be difficult to reconcile with a traditional language; how many parents, would want their children to learn Aragonese, a language that is only spoken in parts of Aragon? However, what these parents do not realize is that bilingualism is regularly championed against monolingualism, and as Hoffmann emphasises: “it is often experienced as an enriching attribute that facilitates a better understanding of the nature of language and provides an opportunity for gaining a deeper insight into two cultures”.¹⁰ Fortunately, it seems as if the Aragonese people, at least in Ayerbe, would not like the Aragonese language to stop being used. However, due to the relatively small number of Ayerbe’s population who claim to be able to speak Aragonese, a policy that would aim to engage the majority of the population could prove challenging. The wishes of people from Ayerbe will, despite what may be perceived as an absence of sustained general public support for the language, shed light on what the linguistic horizon should look like in Alto Aragon.

Participants were asked (Q 42) whether they would like Aragonese to be the language spoken in Alto Aragon in the future. In order to answer, they could choose between two options that would favour Aragonese either totally or above Spanish, two options that would favour Castilian Spanish either totally or over Aragonese and one option that would equate them both. The results can be seen in Graph 37 below.

¹⁰ Charlotte Hoffmann, *An Introduction to Bilingualism* (New York: Longman linguistics library, 1994), p. 5.

Graph 37 The future of the Aragonese language



Any linguistic recuperation process implies the participative will of the speakers and it entails their awareness. Ayerbe's inhabitants are heading towards that sphere since a determination to use Aragonese in the future could be noted. Maybe now that the long-term survival of Aragonese seems to be in question, it is easier to feel nostalgia and affection for it and support its survival. Regarding the participants' choice of language to be used in the Alto Aragon area in the future, as many as 56.3% of those interviewed, expressed a clear preference for the use of Aragonese. The number could be considered to be as high as 78.8% if those who wanted the future of Alto Aragon to be more Castilian-speaking than Aragonese are included, since they had not wanted Aragonese *not* to be spoken. This situation has many similarities with the situation in Ireland where they are in a dilemma about the future of their language as in some ways it continues to die out but it is at the same time making a moderate comeback. There, and as it similarly seems, also

here, almost everybody pays at least lip-service to the idea that it needs to be preserved, identifying it with a national cultural asset and sometimes even as a key to the Irish identity¹¹. People in Ayerbe may or may not support that view, however, what is obvious in both cases is the equal desire to preserve the language.

All the participants who wished for Aragonese to be used in the future in Alto Aragon did so either bilingually together with Castilian Spanish (40%), similar to what has happened in other autonomous communities in Spain, or supporting that Aragonese should be used more often than Castilian Spanish (12.5%) or as the single official language of the Alto Aragon area, although only (3.8%) advocated the latter option. It seems as if the majority of the population would wish for Aragonese to stop being a minority language and to be part of a bilingual future. Only 16.3% considered Castilian Spanish as the single way of speaking in the future. Taking into account that individual disposition to action is usually conditioned by expectation of success and that the final element of the mobilisation tends to start from a previous knowledge of the existing support, these conclusions point out the real interest in Aragonese in Ayerbe and show an enthusiasm for its viability and its future prospects. This is remarkable, and even more so if we take into account that it is the younger generations who call for the establishment of Aragonese as the language to be used in the future with 66.6% of 18 to 25 year olds who would like that to be the case.

¹¹ Ardagh, p. 289.

Table 17 The future of the Aragonese language by age group

	age group						Total
	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	+65	
Yes, only in Aragonese	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	100.0%
Yes, more in Aragonese than Castilian	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%	10.0%	20.0%	30.0%	100.0%
Equally	25.0%	21.9%	25.0%	6.2%	9.4%	12.5%	100.0%
More in Castilian than Aragonese	5.6%	16.7%	22.2%	16.7%	22.2%	16.7%	100.0%
No, only in Castilian	23.1%	7.7%	7.7%	38.5%	7.7%	15.4%	100.0%
No opinion	25.0%	25.0%	25.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Total	18.8%	17.5%	17.5%	16.2%	15.0%	15.0%	100.0%

In order to find out if it was standard Aragonese that the participants would like to preserve in Alto Aragon, the results to this question were compared to those in Question 34 where people confirmed their acquaintance with standard Aragonese. The correlations showed that 16.3% had not heard of standard Aragonese and wanted the future language to be Spanish only, whereas of those who had heard of it, at least half of them wanted the future to be equally bilingual, which did not reveal a very high percentage of the combination of wanting Aragonese to be spoken in Alto Aragon and that Aragonese to be the standard version. Additionally, the results for Question 42 were not that positive either when comparing them to the existence of another linguistic variety in Ayerbe, since as many as 33.3% of those who would like only Aragonese to be spoken in Alto Aragon in future did not recognise another linguistic variety in Ayerbe as was also the case of the 53.8% who wanted that language to be Castilian Spanish.

Unlike in other situations, choosing the language to be used in the future in Alto Aragon, was closely linked to the political party voted for and the general linguistic ideas defended by the parties, thus, as many as 84.2% of those who had voted PP claimed to want Castilian Spanish, either monolingually or on a predominant position in a bilingual setting to be the language used in the future in Alto Aragon, whereas for all of CHA voters Aragonese was the preferred language, albeit with the concession of also having Spanish playing a lesser role. Equally politicised were the feelings of participants towards devolution and language, since the totality of those who did not want an increase of devolved competences, wanted the language to be used in future to be Spanish or mostly Spanish. Conversely, most of those (68.5%) who wanted an increase of those competences as soon as possible had chosen Aragonese to be that language. When comparing the results to this question and those to Question 12 where the Aragonese identity is ascertained, the findings followed the same line as in the two previous categories and Aragonese identity and linguistic identity were closely related. Almost the totality of those who had said they felt Aragonese above all (91.6%) also agreed that Aragonese was the language that needed to be spoken in the future in Alto Aragon, either on its own or bilingually with Spanish, whereas all who had declared that they felt Spanish above all, wanted Castilian Spanish to be that language. Therefore it seems as if there is, at least in the case of Ayerbe, more connection between language and identity than in other parts of Aragon.

Despite the fact that Hobsbawm observed that a standard measure of what symbolises a nation with a claim to self-determination is ethnic and linguistic, this model does not

apply fully to Aragon and the Aragonese language. In Aragon, even though the weight of linguistic identity cannot be denied, and language could potentially be a factor in the definition of an imagined community such as the Aragonese region¹², neither language nor ethnicity, play an essential role¹³; feeling Aragonese is associated with many features throughout the territory that are similar to those used to assert a distinctive identity in other minority languages, among others: cultural, economic or special geographic ones. However, there are still some areas, namely Alto Aragon where some symbolic value is still attached to the language¹⁴. Alto Aragonese inhabitants may or may not feel that asserting their linguistic identity is necessary, but the fact that the most powerful stratum controls the most powerful tools like educational materials is not enough to overwhelm the need to persevere with the normalisation of the language.. Ayerbe, according to the data found, seems to be an example of a location where supporters of Aragonese would like to keep on preserving the language while emphasizing and perpetuating a distinctive identity.

8.3. Linguistic offer and demands (Q53 & 54)

It is important to find a certain correspondence between linguistic offer and demands, as well as between availability and the speaker's wishes. It is undesirable if there is a part of the population which is willing to consume cultural production in Aragonese like books,

¹² Jaro Stacul, 'When Language Does Not Matter: Regional Identity Formation in Northern Italy' in *Language, Ethnicity and the State. Volume one: Minority languages in the European Union* ed. by Camille O'Reilly (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p. 129.

¹³ Eric Hobsbawm, 'Ethnicity and Nationalism in Europe today', *Anthropology Today*, 8, (1992) 3-8, pp. 3-4.

¹⁴ Lenora Timm, 'Ethnic Identity and Minority Language Survival in Brittany', in *Language, Ethnicity and the State. Volume one: Minority languages in the European Union* ed. by Camille O'Reilly (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 104-127, p. 124.

¹⁵ Chambers, p 276.

newspapers and television programmes and these products are not offered or they do not have ready access to them. Conversely a wide offering of products is not a good thing if there is not sufficient basic demand. One cannot read Aragonese if there is nothing written in Aragonese and a language cannot be identified and differentiated from Castilian Spanish if it is not normalised and, above all, if that norm is not propagated through the media, thus breaking with its minority status¹⁶.

In this section, the editorial and audiovisual offer and desired demand is analysed, first the demand of editorial products (Question 53), followed by the evaluation of the audiovisual offer (Question 54) according to the participants in Ayerbe.

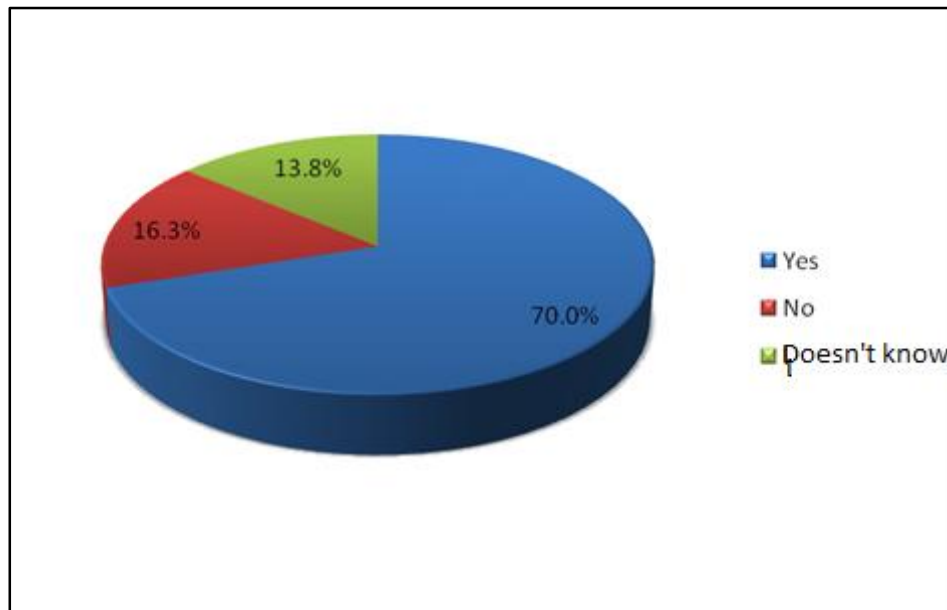
As mentioned before, the availability of magazines or newspapers in Aragonese is almost non-existent. Since the time of the political transition when *Andalan* used to publish some articles in Aragonese, the situation has not progressed much further. Some of the reasons adduced by Ramos Antón are: irregular publication dates, as sometimes the publications are not published when they are supposed to due to lack of material; lack of continuity (aside from *Fuellas*, other published material has often had a short life and sometimes the promised article or articles in a publication do not always materialise); lack of institutional support and lack of variety, since what is published is mostly an apology of the language: “charrar de l’aragonés en aragonés”¹⁷. Should all of these hurdles be overcome, as has happened in Asturias with *Les Noticias*, there is a need to know whether there would be a

¹⁶ Llera Ramo, p. 114.

¹⁷ Rubén Ramos Antón, ‘L’aragonés y os meyos de comunicación’, in *Autas d’a I trobada de estudios y rechiras arredol d’a luenga aragonesa y a suya literatura*, ed. by Franchó Nagore Laín, Franchó Rodés Orquín, and Chesús Vázquez Obrador, (Huesca: IEA & CFA, 1999), pp. 373-380.

demand from the public. That is why the participants were asked (Q 53) whether they thought that there should be a magazine or newspaper either integrally in Aragonese or at least with fixed contributions. The results can be seen in Graph 38 below.

Graph 38 Should there be papers or magazines written in Aragonese?



The vast majority (70%) of those interviewed believe that there should be some papers or magazines written in Aragonese, therefore suggesting that if there was to be such publication, there would be a demand. Only 16.3% wouldn't like to read anything in Aragonese and a proportion as high as 13.8% chose the "Does not answer" option. This may have reflected uncertainty or maybe even indifference towards that kind of publication.

Those who confirmed they would like Aragonese to be more present in the written media were homogeneously divided in all the age groups and had completed their primary

education (48.2%). These participants who responded affirmatively were especially involved politically, since the vast majority of them (80%) had claimed that they wanted to increase the devolved powers as soon as possible, and it also comprised all of CHA voters and 90% of PAR voters amongst those who answered affirmatively, as opposed to the 46.2% of those who answered negatively who were PP voters.

In addition, there was a vague link to identity in that 46.2% of those who answered negatively had claimed to feel first Spanish and then Aragonese and conversely, 35.8% of those who answered “yes” felt Aragonese to a greater or lesser degree. In order to ascertain whether those who wanted more availability of Aragonese would be able to read it and therefore would be willing to purchase it, the reading ability of those participants was correlated with the demand for printed media. As many as 75% of those who wanted Aragonese to be more available could read the language, thus proving that there could be a potential market for any future productions other than the odd article published in *Diario del Alto Aragón*, and therefore a potential increase of the linguistic conscience together with a linguistic community connected by the publications in Aragonese.

The languages spoken in other bilingual regions in Spain have to a greater or lesser degree, managed to infiltrate the public media. Although the situation for the various languages differs greatly, they all seem to have realised that the audiovisual media is one of the best if not the best way to propagate a language and to raise awareness of its existence.

Some of the radio stations in the Basque country broadcast totally or partially in Euskera like Euskadi Irratia and they even reach listeners in all the other Basque speaking areas like Navarre and France. Equally, Basque television: Euskal Telebista can also be watched in all the Basque speaking areas. As tends to happen with most minority languages, Basque television has had a substantial influence on the process of recuperation of the language, it has made Basque's prestige soar and it is a considerable support for those who make the effort to learn it. However its best feature is that it consecrates the validity of the unified standard language: "euskera batua" above all the dialectal differences¹⁸.

Catalan's situation has varied through the decades and its presence in the media has had to overcome quite a few difficulties and periods of discontinuity since the end of the XIXth century, mostly during Franco's time. However, during the last quarter of the XXth century a Catalan space of communication financed to a great extent by public money was created and the television channels, i.e. TV3 and C-33 together with many programs in Catalan in other public and private channels, at the same time as an accomplished education system, became a key tool in the process of linguistic normalisation.¹⁹

The communications industry in Galicia has been active in one way or another since the fifties when some radio stations like Radio Popular de Lugo and Radio Popular de Vigo started broadcasting. In the eighties the real stirring took place when Radio Galega started broadcasting exclusively in Galician twenty four hours a day. It was also in that decade

¹⁸ Siguán, p. 250.

¹⁹ 'El rol de los medios en la supervivencia del catalán', Generalitat de Catalunya <<http://www.gencat.cat>> [accessed 15 March 2011].

that the regional TVG (Television Galega) was introduced²⁰. The contact with the Galician speaking media that viewers and listeners have had since then, has no doubt provoked a positive change in their attitude towards the Galician language.

Even in Asturias, where the number of programs in Asturian is not large, television has served a purpose as a social normaliser. When Llera asked in his last set of questionnaires in Asturias about the similarities of the Asturian used in television programs and the one heard on the streets and compared the results with those obtained in his questionnaires a decade earlier, the perception of similarity had increased with time²¹. It is quite likely that it is not the Asturian spoken in television that has changed to adapt to the Asturian heard on the streets, but that people have started talking in a manner similar to what they hear in television. In this case, television, one of the main language levellers of our times is working in favour of standard Asturian and as would happen with any other minority language, for the benefit of the social norm.

There were at least a few articles in Aragonese that could be found in the Aragonese written media and as part of some magazines²², but as far as the presence of Aragonese in the audiovisual media is concerned, it is merely nominal. There are no public radio or television programmes in or about Aragonese. Neither are there programmes in private radio with the exception of the occasional one on the so called “free radio” stations in Zaragoza where there are short transmissions in Aragonese like *Fendo Orella*. In the past, there have been some sporadic radio programs in *Cadena Ser Huesca* or *Cope Jaca*, but

²⁰ Beswick, pp. 182-83.

²¹ Llera Ramo and San Martín Antuña, *II Estudio sociolingüístico de Asturias*, p. 246.

²² Apart from *Fuellas* that is published entirely in Aragonese.

they have not been on air for some time. Regarding the presence of Aragonese in television, its only presence is limited to a programme that can be watched in the local television in the village of Andorra in the province of Teruel.

At the end of the nineties, Ramos Antón wrote: “Güe pensar en una televisión publica aragonesa ye imposible, asinas que prexinar una televisión aragonesa en aragonés ye zienza-fiziión”²³ However, in 2006 Aragón Televisión came on air for the first time and even in November of the following year there was a section in a programme²⁴ where some stories in Aragonese were told to children.

During the last few years, with the expansion of several internet based television, *charrandoTB.com* and radio channels like *charrando.com* have appeared, together with some videos in Aragonese in YouTube. The internet has really helped in the expansion of Aragonese, up to the point that there is now an Aragonese version of Wikipedia as well as blogs in Aragonese on a diversity of topics that cannot be found in the printed media. This small audiovisual media presence and the incipient presence on the internet would be helped by a linguistic policy in Aragon, maybe they should aspire to the situation in Wales, where the state station in Wales, BBC radio Cymru broadcasts eighteen hours in Welsh every day.²⁵

²³ Ramos Antón, p. 380.

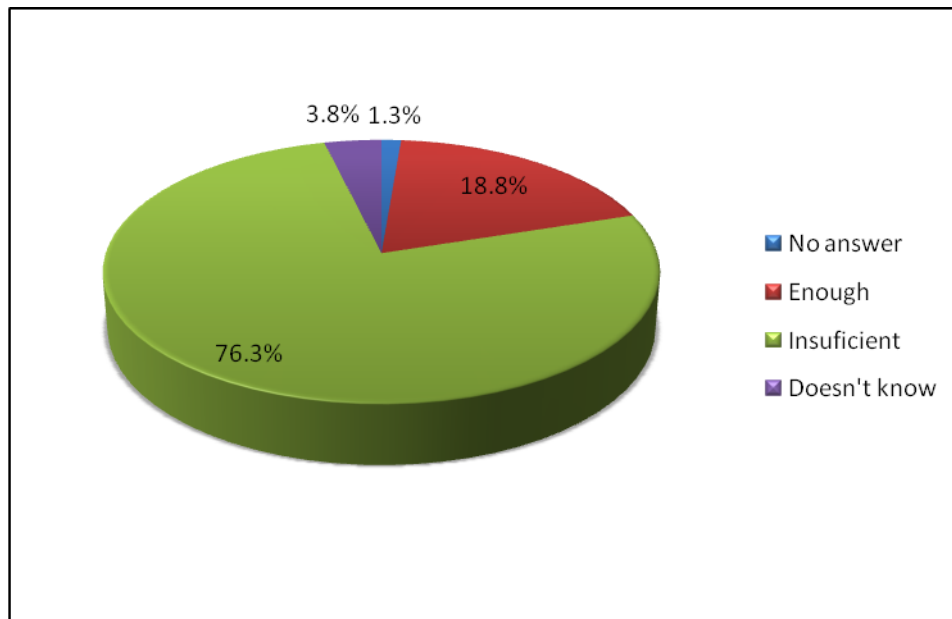
²⁴ *Aragón en Abierto: Esta tarde cuentos para niños en fabla aragonesa*, Aragon TV, 26 November 2007 <<http://www.aragontelevision.es>> [accessed 14 April 2011].

²⁵ Abley, p. 253.

Despite the fact that watching television and listening to radio represent a more passive consumption which reaches wider sectors of population than reading does, there is a negligible assortment of audiovisual media on offer. As a consequence, participants were asked to do an evaluation of the presence of Aragonese in the media in order to be able to gauge their demand. They were asked in Question 54, whether they considered the presence of Aragonese in Radio and television excessive, sufficient or insufficient. The results can be seen in Graph 39.

The majority of participants (76.3%) thought that the availability of Aragonese on radio and television was insufficient. Only 18.8% claimed that the presence of the language in the media was sufficient and nobody thought that it was excessive. Should anybody have chosen that option and due to the absence of the language in the media, that would have meant that they did not want to see nor hear Aragonese at all, which has so far proved to be a very unlikely scenario in Ayerbe. There was also a small percentage of participants (3.8%) who chose the “doesn’t know” option since they probably were not aware of any presence of the language in the media or understandably were unsure of how much Aragonese was used.

Graph 39 Presence of Aragonese in radio and television



Those who believed that the presence of Aragonese on radio or television was insufficient were equally divided in all the age groups. With regards to the education of those who opted for the sufficient option, most had completed their primary or secondary education and a high percentage of University graduates (68.75%) thought that the offer was insufficient.

The answers to this question were again closely linked to the political views of the participants with a correspondence between those who wanted to increase the devolved powers and had claimed that the presence of Aragonese in the media was insufficient (73.7%). Additionally, for the majority of those who felt Aragonese above all (83.3%) the media provision was insufficient, and 33.3% of those who said that it was sufficient had claimed to feel First Spanish and then Aragonese therefore linking regional identity

feelings with enthusiasm to have stronger connections with the Aragonese language in the media. Moreover, of all the participants who had answered this question, the totality of those who had voted for CHA and 90% of PAR voters, the two regionalist parties, believed that the media provision was insufficient as opposed to 53.8% of those who had claimed that it was enough and had voted for PP, a party that in Aragon is generally opposed to linguistic policies and language promotion.

Just under half of those who thought the presence of Aragonese in the media was insufficient (45.9%) had claimed earlier to understand Aragonese, thus showing that there is still a high percentage of those who understand the vernacular language that are not worried about present and future speakers and their increased exposure to the language.

The prevalent opinion in Ayerbe that the presence of audiovisual media programmes in Aragonese needs to increase is shared by the majority of those who were interviewed in Huesca²⁶, where 70.7% of participants claimed that they would like to have a greater incidence of Aragonese on radio and television²⁷ as well as those who were interviewed in Monzón²⁸, where 59.9% of the participants claimed that they would like to see more sections in Aragonese in the media, predominantly on radio and television²⁹. Additionally, over half of those interviewed by Martínez also agreed and when they were asked whether they would like to be able to watch television programmes in the vernacular language,

²⁶ Participants in Huesca were asked: ¿A través de qué medios de comunicación te gustaría, en el futuro, tener una presencia más amplia del aragonés? 39.9% said Television, 30.8% radio, 17.6% internet and 37.2% magazines and newspapers.

²⁷ Gallmüller, p. 323.

²⁸ In the council's questionnaire in Monzón participants were asked: ¿Cree que en Aragón debería haber medios de comunicación – televisión, radio, periódicos – que incluyeran espacios en aragonés? 59.9% answered affirmatively.

²⁹ Nagore Laín, 'Análisis y comentario', p. 21.

55.6% answered in a positive way.³⁰ It is noticeable that participants in Ayerbe are the most involved together with those in Huesca. This could be related to the relevance of the regionalist political parties in both places which have always been involved with the linguistic reality in the Plana de Uesca area, and have been concerned with the media in statements by CHA like: “esperamos que los medios de comunicación públicos de Aragón tengan sensibilidad hacia la realidad lingüística que vivimos y que se reconoce ya, de forma oficial, con la Ley de Lenguas”.³¹ There were no questions about the use of internet when the survey was conducted as, at the time, its use was not as widespread as it is now.

8.4 Linguistic demand: education (Q 44)

In this last section, the demand for schooling in Aragonese will be analysed in respect of Question 44. For minority languages schooling is a crucial aspect in any process of linguistic normalisation. If a proper introduction of the minority language in the education system does not exist, it will be practically impossible for this language to break away from its situation as a marginal, familiar and informal language, for this it would have to be normalised as a valid language in all manner of social situations.

In the context of Spain, the development of the devolved State has meant that all the regions that have a recognised “lengua propia” have the benefit of an important presence of those languages – other than Spanish- in their education systems.³² This has had a

³⁰ Martínez Ferrer, *Bilingüismo y Enseñanza en Aragón*, p. 244.

³¹ CHA solicita programación en lenguas propias en la radio y televisión públicas de Aragón 25/01/2010 <www.cha.org>[Accessed 23 June 2010].

³² Siguán, p. 283.

remarkable repercussion for those languages, for instance, in Catalonia, in the last three decades the language has gained prestige, status, support and its number of speakers has increased significantly. This has been achieved amongst other reasons by the compulsory teaching of Catalan in schools.³³ The Basque language schools *ikastolas* started increasing in 1978 when the bilingualism decrees were ratified³⁴ and they have even brought the language to areas in Navarre where it may have disappeared as a native language in the Middle Ages. In Galicia, the aim was to reintroduce the language mostly to those who used it generally in restricted contexts. Thus, the initiative in education was the recuperation of Galician within the classroom. However, although initial studies were cautiously optimistic about legislative measures and their success, recent investigations have been especially critical of the local government trying to implement these measures too systematically in the whole region.³⁵

The current legislation allows that while in those regions, like Catalonia or Galicia, it is compulsory to teach both the language itself and through the medium of the autochthonous language, in other *Comunidades Autónomas* like Aragon or Asturias there is no possibility of teaching through the medium of Aragonese or Asturian³⁶ and the learning of these languages tends to be optional.³⁷

³³ Charlotte Hoffman, 'Balancing Language Planning and Language Rights: Catalonia's Uneasy Juggling Act', *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 21 (2000), 425-441, p. 439.

³⁴ Siguán, pp. 241-44.

³⁵ Beswick, p. 166.

³⁶ At present, Asturian is optionally used in pre-primary, primary and secondary schools as a subject and as a medium of instruction. It is available as an option in the teacher-training colleges and at the University of Oviedo/Uvièdu. The language is also taught to adults. 'Asturian', Mercator — European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning <<http://www.mercator-research.eu/minority-languages/Language-Factsheets/spain>> [accessed 10 February 2011].

³⁷ Huguet Canalís, 'Actitudes lingüísticas de los escolares de Aragón. Avance de los primeros resultados', *Alazet*, 17, (2005), 69-94, p 71.

The European Charter for Lesser-Used Languages was ratified by Spain in 2001 and The Mercator Education Centre works³⁸ in the field of language learning and use at school³⁹. These initiatives among several others make many minority language communities consider this to be the “Europe of the regions” where the strengthening of their cultures and languages is facilitated⁴⁰. Despite all this assistance, the Aragonese language has not progressed in the education area. Aragonese has been taught as an extra-curricular language in several state schools since the 1997-1998 academic year and there has even been a proposal of an immersion programme⁴¹ that due to lack of institutional support has not been implemented. The teaching of Aragonese seems to be stationary and in need of momentum.

According to the renowned UNESCO report on teaching minority languages, it is paramount when a child has a minority language as a mother tongue, to be taught in that language as it favours a proper psychological development of the child as if not, this may even have a detrimental effect in their learning as a whole⁴². The teaching of the vernacular languages has many advantages for the children and Martínez Ferrer detected

³⁸ The Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning collects, researches, studies, circulates, and applies knowledge in the field of language learning and use at school, at home and through cultural participation.

³⁹ Mercator <<http://www.mercator-research.eu/>> [accessed 10 February 2011].

⁴⁰ Mar-Molinero, *The Role of Language*, p. 127.

⁴¹ Antón Eito Mateo, ‘Enta un sistema d’amostranza en aragonés: en esfensa de lo modelo d’inmersión’ in *Autas d’a II trobada de estudios y rechiras arredol d’a luenga aragonesa y a suya literatura*, ed. by Franchó Nagore Laín, Franchó Rodés Orquín, and Chesús Vázquez Obrador, (Huesca: IEA & CFA, 2001), pp. 89-113.

⁴² UNESCO (1953) “Empleo de las lenguas vernáculas en la enseñanza”. Monografías sobre educación fundamental. 8. Unesco. Paris, p. 11.

in his study that there were problems in reading and writing in children from Aragonese bilingual areas in Aragon⁴³.

However, the Aragonese language first needs to be recognised as such, and then, “penderá de la politica d’ixa comunidá (u de lo grupo dominan), de la sensibilidat sozial y de atras midas democraticas y de chustizia sozial, ta que la luenga minoritaria seiga contemplata dintro de lo sistema escolar formal.”⁴⁴ For Aragonese to be assimilated into the compulsory schooling system, it would be equally necessary beforehand to explore the linguistic attitude towards Aragonese that society could have, the success approval as Lambert proposes will depend on what is seen as the motivation the students have for learning it, this being either *instrumental* or for *integration* purposes.⁴⁵ Integration would only happen in Aragon if a positive attitude towards Aragonese is achieved and passed through the generations. This would ensue nonetheless by native speakers choosing to use it as their home language, as without this happening, language rights by themselves would not be able to guarantee language maintenance as McCarty and Watahomigie observe.⁴⁶

Romaine’s analogy of looking to schools and proclamations of official status to preserve languages as looking for one’s lost keys under the lamp-post because that is where one can see better rather than being the place where you have lost them, is particularly poignant for Aragonese where it is potentially easier to establish schools and maybe even declare the language official rather than manage to get parents or in most cases grandparents to speak

⁴³ Juan Martínez Ferrer, ‘El aprendizaje lectoescritor en el medio bilingüe aragonés: repercusiones escolares de la diglosia’, *Revista de Investigación Educativa*, 8 (15), (1990), 7-18.

⁴⁴ Eito Mateo, p. 101.

⁴⁵ Huguet Canals, ‘Actitudes lingüísticas de los escolares de Aragón’, pp. 69-70.

⁴⁶ Cited in Romaine, p. 242.

Aragonese to their children or grandchildren. This would be the best way to guarantee transmission although of course it is not viable to legislate on language use at home. However, currently there is not a proper linguistic policy in place to even persevere with the teaching of Aragonese and the language is definitely lacking in economic support to create teaching materials and to train teachers. Otherwise the only aim will be to recommend or promote the teaching of it, and it may get to be a case of too little too late⁴⁷.

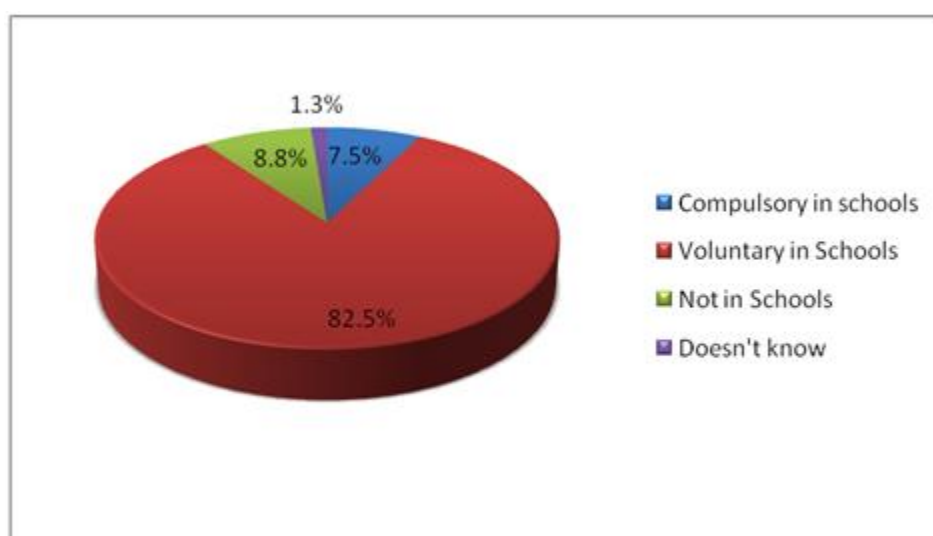
Therefore, in order to gauge their linguistic attitudes, participants were reminded that a way of protecting autochthonous languages is to teach them to children in schools and were subsequently asked to choose one of the given possibilities with which they would agree the most regarding Alto Aragon. The options were that it should be studied compulsorily in schools, voluntarily, or that it should not be studied in schools.

The attitude towards teaching Aragonese in schools was extremely positive. The use of the language in the education system normally symbolises a conclusive step towards linguistic recuperation policy, and literacy in Aragonese would constitute an advance towards normalisation. People from Ayerbe seem to agree with these principles since nine out of ten agree with the implementation of Aragonese teaching in schools. The vast majority, 82.5% aspire to have voluntary instruction, and there is even a small percentage (7.5%) who demand compulsory schooling in Aragonese, while only 8.8% reject the idea that it should play a part in the education system.

⁴⁷ Romaine, p. 242.

The small percentage of those who dislike the idea of incorporating it in the education system can be compared positively with the situation of other minority languages like Irish for which due to the old prejudice against it, the feeling persists among parents who believe that their children should concentrate on English instead of Irish if they are to go to Dublin or to England to find a job.⁴⁸

Graph 40 How should the teaching of Aragonese be in Alto Aragon?



Those who considered that Aragonese should be taught in schools were equally divided in all age groups and regarding the option of Aragonese being taught at schools voluntarily, the overwhelming majority of the participants who had completed their primary education (91.6%) and most of those (75%) that had finished their University education agreed with it. In Ayerbe, as regards schooling in the vernacular language and politics, the link is not as defining a characteristic as it has been in previous sections since the percentage figure of 72.8% for those who wanted an increase in devolved powers and Aragonese to be taught at schools voluntarily is not overwhelmingly high. In addition, 42.9% of those who

⁴⁸ Ardagh, p. 296.

said that Aragonese should not be studied in schools had said they felt more Spanish than Aragonese, although there did not seem to be a relation between Aragonese identity and wanting Aragonese schooling, since of those who thought that Aragonese should be studied compulsorily at schools 33.3% had expressed that they felt more Spanish than Aragonese, against a smaller amount of 16.7% who had claimed to feel more Aragonese than Spanish. On the other hand, regarding the political party voted for, it was clear that for those who voted for the regionalist parties learning Aragonese was significant, since the totality of PAR and CHA voters had all agreed on the need to study it voluntarily. Conversely, 66.6% of the voters who had chosen PSOE, had stated that Aragonese should not be studied at school. The need for Aragonese to be present in the classroom was expressed chiefly by those who were aware of the existence of Aragonese in Ayerbe with almost the totality of participants (95%) wanting it to be studied, against 71.4% of those who had claimed that there was not another variety stating that it should not be studied in the classroom.

The dominant opinion in Ayerbe that Aragonese should be taught at schools is shared by the majority of those who answered their questionnaire in Huesca where 89.5% ⁴⁹of the participants claimed that they would like Aragonese to be taught in schools.⁵⁰ For those interviewed in Monzon the question was slightly different in that they were asked about whether they would like Aragonese to be taught at all levels as part of the curriculum. The results show an overriding desire for learning Aragonese, with as many as 54.4% of

⁴⁹ 11.5% as a compulsory subject and 78% as a voluntary subject.

⁵⁰ Gallmüller, p. 324.

participants answering affirmatively.⁵¹ The study done by Martínez went even further and parents were asked whether they would like their children to be taught through the medium of Aragonese. The findings are positive, with 43.7% of participants answering in an affirmative way.⁵² These results show a remarkable overview of the learning desires of Aragonese in several areas of Aragon. Data that could be taken into account to help implement the linguistic policy that participants seem to want for them to be able to study Aragonese.

8.5. Conclusions

The idea that standard Aragonese needs to be recognised and protected is prevalent amongst those questioned, this attitude, although it is homogeneously distributed amongst all the political party voters, was mostly defended by those who wanted the devolved powers to be increased as soon as possible, thus linking political independence and the perseverance of linguistic maintenance. Moreover it was not only those who had an interest in the regional situation that agreed with the promotion of standard Aragonese, since political party voters of all denominations had a confirmed interest in the language.

There is no doubt that most people in Ayerbe wished for a bilingual future in Alto Aragon, consequently showing their enthusiasm for the viability of Aragonese and its future prospects. Their linguistic beliefs were closely linked to their political opinions since those

⁵¹ Nagore Laín, 'Análís y comentario', p. 21.

⁵² Martínez Ferrer, *Bilingüismo y Enseñanza en Aragón*, p. 245.

who did not want an increase of devolved competences wanted Spanish to be used in Alto Aragon, whereas over nine in ten of those who felt Aragonese above all, had wanted Aragonese to be the language to be spoken in the area in the future, therefore showing a very strong connection in Ayerbe, over other parts in Aragon, between language and identity.

Linguistic demands are rather prominent in all the environments; in fact, Ayerbe's inhabitants are mostly dissatisfied with both the offers available in written and audiovisual media. In consequence seven out of ten would like to see more papers or magazines written in Aragonese and more than three quarters believed that the availability of Aragonese on radio and television was insufficient. These demands were made by voters of all the political parties, although the immense majority of those who voted for the regionalist parties were the most fervent defenders.

Lastly, in the education context the attitude towards teaching Aragonese in schools was very positive with a strong demand for its voluntary teaching. More than nine out of ten aspired to be able to learn Aragonese, and above all, it was once more the totality of those who had voted for the regionalist parties that had agreed on the need to study it voluntarily, again in the vein of what had happened with all the other linguistic demands linking strong political beliefs with the need for more exposure to Aragonese.

PART III

Conclusion

I have tried to present, through my data, the controversial debate surrounding endangered minority languages such as Aragonese, in Ayerbe, and the arguments surrounding mechanisms to ensure its continuity. Although my study focuses on a very specific language spoken in a limited area, the parameters and methodology I have used can be extrapolated to analyse other similar cases, both in the context of the Iberian Peninsula and the wider European framework.

The data provided by the questionnaire contributes to the understanding of the historical, political and sociolinguistic context of the Aragonese language in Ayerbe and the findings might impact on the way that Aragonese and Spanish institutions approach and implement their linguistic policies in the future.

According to Ricento a theory of language revitalisation or loss ‘has little value in and of itself as a tool to argue for the need for specific language policies’,¹ I agree with him in that the theory by itself would just advocate specific policy directions or policies and therefore what is needed in terms of future research for Aragonese is a more overarching way of bringing in data from a range of disciplinary perspectives, thus if different areas of academia are involved there is a greater possibility of achieving a serious attempt to influence public policy choices and outcomes.

The aim of this thesis was to look closely into the current use of the Aragonese language in Ayerbe and to examine its current sociolinguistic situation. The first hypothesis for this work stated that the Aragonese language may be an intrinsic characteristic of Aragonese

¹ Ricento, p. 11.

ethnic identity (even if it is not used). According to the background information found in Chapter 3 and the language identity and nationalism sub-section, the Aragonese language does not seem to have become a symbol of national identity, instead Aragonese people identify themselves with the territory they inhabit. However, based on the answers to one of the questions to the questionnaire where participants are asked about the language they would like to be used in Alto Aragon, it shows that, in general, most people want to identify with the tenet of one language with one territory and use Aragonese in Alto Aragon even if they do not know or use the language themselves.

The second hypothesis asserts that lack of firm linguistic policies and planning impact on the behavioural practices of language users and these practices in turn may be reflected in their attitudes towards the language. As seen in chapters 3.4 and 3.5 about the language policies in Aragon, there has not been an effective language policy in Aragon that has been used by all institutions and citizens, and Cooper's definition of language planning has not taken effect in Aragon. This confirms the results found from the questionnaire where participants generally rejected the idea of a standardised form and therefore the hypothesis is supported: because there is no standardisation of the language, its status is undermined and therefore as there is no proper corpus, there is no viable linguistic policy. The language users do not think that the language itself is important and thus they do not use the language.

The subsection of the second hypothesis maintains that it is the attitude towards the language and the lack of linguistic awareness that may be to blame for the death of the Aragonese language. Having carried out the research phase of this work and analysed the results of the questionnaire this hypothesis can be largely accepted. However, this is too categorical a statement to make without taking into account the accompanying

circumstances. In view of the fact that, although it is apparent that the presence of the Aragonese language in Ayerbe is not as robust as it could be, Aragonese is a resilient language and the population of Ayerbe still has a strong attachment to it and thus consciously or unconsciously it is still used .

Taking into account the troubled history of the Aragonese people and the unevenness of the process that had to be followed until the current formation of Aragon as a region, it is not surprising to find the high level of uncertainty encountered among Ayerbe's inhabitants with respect to their confidence in standing up for the use of the Aragonese language. However, after much defence of political regionalism by right, left and centre politics throughout the twentieth century, Aragonese people and according to the data, especially Ayerbe's people have developed a well established regional identity that began in the nineteen seventies and has until now had a broad support. This political regionalism, reinvigorated in the last few decades, has influenced the trajectory of the Aragonese autonomic situation that so many defend and want to expand in Ayerbe.

Most people in Ayerbe identify their own linguistic variety with that of neighbouring villages, but they do not want to be identified with those who "speak worse " It is clear that most of their perceptions of the Aragonese language are that it is what other people speak and something they do not want to be associated with.

Although linguistic identity is somewhat diffuse in Ayerbe the data presents a situation of bilingualism characterized by diglossia and lack of normalisation. The identification of

Aragonese or Fabra as the *lengua propia* in Aragon is associated with a series of variables that define fundamentally a rural and traditional factor.

On the other hand and despite this defining characteristics of a situation lacking in normalisation, as many as eight out of ten would like Aragonese either monolingually or bilingually to be the language to be used in the area thus showing an aspiring bilingual community. It can be said that despite Castilian being the educated and dominant language, Aragonese is acknowledged as the “*lengua propia*”, it is seen as a more consistent emotional nucleus, which facilitates success and receptivity of an appropriate policy of conservation and normalisation.

People in Ayerbe believe in the importance of the different variants of Aragonese therefore any potential normalisation process would have to take into account that there is a manifest sensitivity towards the dialectal diversity of Aragonese and different variables should be integrated to avoid a possible risk of linguistic exclusion.

In the last two decades of the XXth century the two regionalist parties PAR and CHA contributed to the nationalism rhetoric in Aragon and fought for Aragon to define itself as a nation and for a steady recuperation of identity symbols, including recognising the existence of three languages in Aragon. Ayerbe, along with the ideas of these political parties has supported their principles, especially since CHA, which has for a while had some councillors in the village, promotes them. That reflects the political situation in the village, since Ayerbe has been for many years a left wing stronghold.

The minority status of Aragonese was very clear under the light of the analysed data. When analysing the awareness of the presence of Aragonese in Ayerbe, only one in two recognized spontaneously the existence of an Aragonese vernacular language in their community and it was mostly those in the younger generations who could not understand it, speak it, read it, nor write it, consequently diminishing the hopes for the future of the language. However, there is an extraordinary high percentage of the population who understand it and can read it, which proves that Aragonese still maintains some prestige and visibility within the dominant community of Castilian Spanish. Thus, despite the undoubtedly minority situation of Aragonese, there could be a positive base for its recuperation, providing the right measures are provided.

Since the union of Aragon and Catalonia in the twelfth century, Aragonese Romance was not used so often politically and culturally and literature never became viable, this was the beginning of the demise of Aragonese. The linguistic effects of the unification of Castile and Aragon were also considerable, since Aragonese Romance started being defined as coarse. Thus the diglossic situation of Aragonese which still persists today was born. In the nineteenth century Aragon did not join the spirit of movements like *Rexurdimento* or *Renaixença* as other minority languages in Spain did, instead, the *baturro* idiom which were examples of vulgar Castilian was promoted harming more than aiding the vernacular language since it created from then on a portray of a provincial variant of Castilian which from then until today is what many people in Aragon, including Ayerbe, think they speak. Subsequently, speakers developed inhibitions and complexes about speaking Aragonese thus reinforcing the diglossia already existent. In the seventies, with the beginning of the recuperation movement of the Aragonese language, the disputes about the language which

have until now hindered the process of normalisation that the Aragonese language so needs, appeared.

Linguistic awareness seems to be rather varied. There is a majority who perceive the number of people who know Aragonese to be very small, despite the fact that out of the very same people who had acknowledged its presence, the great majority had claimed to be able to understand it. There also seems to be a real lack of awareness when Ayerbe's inhabitants tend to point at people outside the primary nucleus as the true speakers, therefore showing an ostracism of Aragonese. This, together with the fact that the language is being lost in the younger generations, and due to lack of intergenerational transmission, as discussed in chapter 1.1, illustrates the situation of Aragonese as an endangered language.

The first remarkable milestone in recent times for the Aragonese language was the ratification by Spain of the European Charter for regional or minority language in 2000,² whereby Spain also declared as regional or minority languages those non official languages like Aragonese whose Estatutes protected them in the territory where they were spoken.³ Since then, as regards normalisation, the Aragonese language has reached a plateau as the "ley de lenguas", although ratified is yet to be implemented.

Despite a prevalence of participants who were not familiar with standard Aragonese, a majority considered Aragonese should be normalised, however, any process of

² European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

<<http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/html/148.htm>> [Accessed 22 March 2011].

³ 'Dictamen de la Comisión de 31 de octubre de 2000', *Boletín Oficial de las Cortes Generales* Consello d'a Fabla Aragonesa <<http://www.consello.org/pdf/ditamencartaeuropea.pdf>> [accessed 22 March 2011].

normalisation would have to be designed taking into account the conservation of the local variants in order not to generate a linguistic exclusion of the speakers by imposing an educated linguistic standard which would be too far removed from the dialectal variation. This could be achieved by standardising the written form and accepting all the oral variants as an initial stage.

The idea that standard Aragonese needs to be recognized and protected is prevalent amongst those questioned. This positive response can be added to the equally positive basic attitudes of public opinion in Ayerbe with respect to the future of Aragonese, with the great majority favouring its institutional protection. There is no doubt that most people in Ayerbe wished for a bilingual future in Alto Aragon, consequently showing their enthusiasm for the viability of Aragonese and its future prospects, in fact, over nine in ten of those who felt Aragonese above all, had wanted Aragonese to be the language to be spoken in the area in the future, therefore showing a very strong connection in Ayerbe between language and identity.

In the education context the attitude towards teaching Aragonese in schools was very positive with a strong demand for its voluntary teaching. This was fully supported by regionalist party voters and it would again be these voters the ones that more often will display a greater connection with Aragonese and the feeling of Aragonese identity truly showing Ayerbe for what it is; a village in which Aragonese and up to a point linguistic identity are closely linked to left wing politics. This situation tends to be replicated in Aragon, where unlike the situation with many other minority languages in Spain, like

Catalan with support from left and right wing politics, linguistic identity in Aragon is mostly linked to the left of centre nationalist parties.

The general impression after analysing the data of the questionnaire, was that the Aragonese language in Ayerbe is alive if a little fragile in terms of health; the perception of the language is at times not as negative as was originally thought, but there is a patent lack of awareness in terms of the linguistic code and its use. This points to the fact that the future of the Aragonese language will depend to a great extent on a decisive linguistic policy on normalisation. This normalisation of the language is in all probability the only possibility for survival of Aragonese in the twenty first century and since the Spanish constitution grants some autonomous rights to Aragon such as its own government responsible for health, economic planning, mass media and education; the Aragonese language should be increasingly present in the administration, and in the streets, but above all, it should be introduced at all levels of education to aid linguistic awareness and to avoid the diglossic situation to be prolonged any further.

However, despite lack of institutional support, Aragonese society has relentlessly organized itself into cultural associations and they themselves have for the last thirty five years carried the whole weight of the scientific and economic research, the teaching, promotion, awareness and spread of Aragonese. Thus, most of these organizations promote the preservation and learning of Aragonese as an attempt to make the population aware of the exceptional cultural characteristics that are linked to the social interactions among speakers of Aragonese, in the belief that if the language is lost, some cultural, social and political features by which Aragonese people feel identified, may also be lost.

These cultural associations reflect the attitudes towards the language that part of the Aragonese population hold. However, for the language to survive it is paramount for the autonomous Aragonese government to have an interest and to devote the resources to protect it so that ultimately it could reach the ideal scenario of enjoying a trilingual status together with Castilian Spanish and Catalan. However, as the Aragonese language is not fully standardised, it is difficult for it to become official. Since the normativisation of a language often tends to be the means to its long term survival, for the process of recuperation to succeed, and in order to reach a social as well as a linguistic normalisation, there is a need for a consensus at institutional as well as academic level.

Appendix 1

Cuestionario para un estudio sociolingüístico en la localidad de Ayerbe

Encuestadora: Rosa Bercero

Fecha:

Le rogamos por favor, que nos conceda un poco de su tiempo, y le agradecemos su colaboración. Sus respuestas se guardarán en el más absoluto secreto. Muchas gracias.

- 1- EDAD: ¿En qué grupo de edad se encuentra usted?
- Entre 18 y 25 ✓✓
 - Entre 26 y 35 ✓✓
 - Entre 36 y 45 ✓✓
 - Entre 46 y 55 ✓✓
 - Entre 56 y 65 ✓✓
 - Mayor de 65 ✓✓
-
- 2- SEXO: ¿Es usted?
- Hombre ✓✓
 - Mujer ✓✓
-
- 3- NACIMIENTO: ¿Dónde ha nacido usted?
- Nombre del municipio: -----
 - Zona:
 - En esta zona de Aragón ✓✓
 - En otra zona de Aragón ✓✓
 - Fuera de Aragón ✓✓
- Enumere sus estancias de cierta envergadura fuera de Ayerbe y su duración: -----
-
- 4- Y sus padres ¿dónde nacieron?
- Ambos en Ayerbe ✓✓
 - Solo padre ayerbense ✓✓
 - Solo madre ayerbense ✓✓
 - Ninguno es ayerbense ✓✓

5- (Solo para los nacidos fuera de Ayerbe) ¿A que edad vino usted a vivir a Ayerbe?

- Menor de 5 años	✓✓
- Tenía entre 5 y 12 años	✓✓
- Tenía más de 12 años	✓✓

6- ESTADO CIVIL: ¿Está usted?

- Soltero	✓✓
- Casado	✓✓
- Soltero, pero vive en pareja	✓✓
- Divorciado o separado	✓✓
- Viudo	✓✓

¿Dónde nació su cónyuge?: -----

7- ESTUDIOS: ¿Qué estudios ha realizado usted?

- Ninguno (no sabe leer ni escribir)	✓✓
- Primaria incompleta (sabe leer)	✓✓
- Primaria completa (graduado escolar)	✓✓
- Bachillerato	✓✓
- Formación Profesional	✓✓
- Diplomado	✓✓
- Carrera superior	✓✓

8- PROFESIÓN:

- Empresario con asalariados (Agrario o industrial)	✓✓
- Empresario sin asalariados (Agrario o industrial)	✓✓
- Obrero cualificado (Agrario o industrial)	✓✓
- Directivo de empresa o de la administración	✓✓
- Técnico de empresa o de la administración	✓✓
- Personal administrativo	✓✓
- Profesional liberal	✓✓
- Otros (Especificar): -----	✓✓
- Parado	✓✓
- Jubilado o pensionista	✓✓
- Estudiante	✓✓

¿Podría especificar su profesión o trabajo concreto o el de la persona de
quién depende económicamente?: -----

9- RENTA: ¿Le importaría decirme la cantidad aproximada que entra en su casa al
mes? No es necesaria la cantidad exacta, sino entre que intervalos de la escala está
comprendida.

- Menos de 300 € mensuales (50.000Pts)	✓✓
- Entre 300 € y 600 € mensuales (50.000 y 100.000Pts)	✓✓
- Entre 600 € y 1.200 € mensuales (100.000 y 200.000 Pts)	✓✓

- Entre 1.200 € y 2.400 € mensuales (200.000 y 400.000 Pts) 9
 - Más de 2.400 € (400.000 Pts) 9
 - NS 9
 - NC 9
-

10- CLASE SOCIAL: ¿A qué clase social piensa usted que pertenece?

- Alta 9
 - Media-Alta 9
 - Media-Media 9
 - Media-Baja 9
 - Baja 9
 - NS 9
 - NC 9
-

11- Pensando en su interés y en el de Aragón, ¿Cree que se debería ampliar la Autonomía aragonesa con más competencias?

- Sí, cuanto antes 9
- Sí, pero sin prisa 9
- Depende 9
- No, estamos bien con las actuales 9
- No, habría que pensar en reducirlas 9
- NS 9

12- Entre aragonés y español. ¿Cómo se siente usted? ¿Con cuál de las siguientes posibilidades está más conforme?

- Español ante todo 9
- Primero español y luego aragonés 9
- Tanto una cosa como la otra 9
- Primero aragonés y luego español 9

- Aragonés ante todo
 - NS
- 13- Normalmente al hablar de política se usan los términos IZQUIERDA-DERECHA. Si tuviera que situarse en una escala que va del 1 al 10, según se sienta más de izquierdas o más de derechas, siendo el “1” la extrema izquierda, el “5” el centro , y el “10” la extrema derecha. ¿En qué punto de la escala se situaría usted de acuerdo con sus ideas políticas?
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- NS
 - NC
- 14- Si lo recuerda le importaría decirme a qué partido votó usted en las últimas elecciones generales para las Cortes Españolas?
- PP
 - PSOE
 - IU
 - CHA
 - PAR
 - Otros
 - No votó
 - No recuerda
 - NC
- 15- En Ayerbe, además del castellano ¿existe alguna otra variedad lingüística?
- Sí
 - No
 - NC
- 16- Si ha respondido sí a la pregunta 15, ¿la entiende usted?
- Sí
 - No
 - NC
- 17- Si ha respondido sí a la pregunta 15, ¿la sabe hablar?
- Sí
 - No
 - NC
- 18- Si ha respondido sí a la pregunta 15, ¿sabe leer textos escritos en ella?
- Sí
 - No
 - NC
- 19- Si ha respondido sí a la pregunta 15, ¿la ha utilizado o la utiliza para escribir?
- Sí
 - i. Cartas personales
 - ii. Notas (anuncios, mensajes)
 - iii. Trabajos literarios
 - iv. Otros

- No 9
- NC 9
- 20- Si ha respondido sí a la pregunta 15, ¿Cree que en Ayerbe las personas que hablan la variedad local son:?
- Pocas 9
- Bastante numerosas 9
- Casi todas 9
- NC 9
- 21- Si ha respondido sí a la pregunta 15, ¿Cree que en Ayerbe las personas que conocen (aunque no hablan) la variedad local son:?
- Pocas 9
- Bastante numerosas 9
- Casi todas 9
- NC 9
- 22- Si ha respondido NO a la pregunta 15, la razón es que:
- No hay tradición familiar en el uso de ese habla 9
- Se ha perdido en las generaciones más jóvenes 9
- Sus antepasados no son originarios de la localidad 9
- Otros motivos ----- 9
- 23- Si ha respondido sí a la pregunta 15, ¿Con qué relaciona esa variedad lingüística que se habla en Ayerbe?
- Con el castellano 9
- Con otras formas de hablar del Alto Aragón 9
- Es una forma de hablar propia de Ayerbe exclusivamente 9
- Otros ----- 9
- 24- Si ha contestado sí a la pregunta 15, ¿Cómo la considera usted?
- Una variedad lingüística normal y corriente 9
- Una variedad lingüística incorrecta o mal hablada 9
- NC 9
- 25- Cree usted que los aragoneses que no son del Alto Aragón consideran que en Ayerbe...
- se habla bien 9
- se habla mal 9
- se habla de una forma distinta (sin valorar) 9
- NC 9
- 26- En Ayerbe, ¿hay alguna tradición popular en la que se use el habla local?
- Sí 9
- No 9
- Dé el nombre -----
- 27- Si ha contestado sí a la pregunta 26, ¿le gustaría que se conservaran esas tradiciones (en el habla local)?
- Sí 9
- No 9
- Es indiferente 9

- 28- En relación a los letreros, rótulos, los términos de su localidad (nombre del pueblo, de las calles, partidas de terreno, etc.) ¿En qué lengua cree usted que deben ir?
- Sólo en castellano
 - Sólo en la variedad local
 - En ambas lenguas
 - Unas cosas en castellano y otras en la variedad local
 - NS
- 29- ¿Cree usted que en Ayerbe se habla de manera parecida o bastante parecida a otras zonas del Alto Aragón?
- No, solamente se habla así en Ayerbe
 - Sí, en pueblos vecinos
- Indique los pueblos:-----
-
- Sí, en otras comarcas del Alto Aragón
- Indique las comarcas:-----
-
- NC
- 30- ¿Cuál cree usted que es la lengua propia del Alto Aragón?
- El aragonés o “fabla aragonesa”
 - El castellano
 - Las dos
 - NC
- 31- A veces, al habla del Alto Aragón se le suele llamar “fabla” (fabla aragonesa) ¿Para usted “fabla” y aragonés son lo mismo o son cosas distintas?
- Son lo mismo
 - Son dos cosas distintas
 - NC
- 32- (Para los que han dicho que son cosas distintas) ¿En qué se diferencian?
-
- 33- ¿Para usted hay una sola habla altoaragonesa o varias hablas altoaragonesas?
- Hay una única habla altoaragonesa con variantes locales
 - Hay varias hablas altoaragonesas distintas
 - NS
- 34- ¿Ha oído hablar de un “aragonés común” o “aragonés unificado”?
- Sí
 - No
 - NC
- 35- Si ha contestado sí a la pregunta 34, ¿qué opinión le merece?
- Positiva
 - Negativa

- Me es indiferente 𐀀
- NC 𐀀
- 36- Si ha contestado no a la pregunta 34: en el Alto Aragón se conservan formas de hablar distintas del castellano. ¿Qué opinión le merecería una lengua aragonesa común escrita que sirviera como referencia para todas ellas? 𐀀
- Positiva 𐀀
- Negativa 𐀀
- Me es indiferente 𐀀
- NC 𐀀
- 37- Si ha contestado sí a la pregunta 34, ¿ha leído textos escritos en “aragonés común”? 𐀀
- Sí 𐀀
- No 𐀀
- NC 𐀀
- 38- Si ha contestado sí a la pregunta 34, ¿ha utilizado ese “aragonés común” por escrito? 𐀀
- Sí 𐀀
- No 𐀀
- NC 𐀀
- 39- Si ha contestado sí a la pregunta 34, ¿habla ese “aragonés común”? 𐀀
- Sí 𐀀
- No 𐀀
- NC 𐀀
- 40- Si ha contestado sí a la pregunta 34, ¿identifica ese “aragonés común” con su variedad local? 𐀀
- Sí 𐀀
- Parcialmente 𐀀
- Ligeramente 𐀀
- No 𐀀
- NC 𐀀
- 41- Pensando en el aragonés escrito o hablado en los libros y en los medios de comunicación, así como su enseñanza en las escuelas. ¿Cree usted que es conveniente que se utilice un aragonés común como se ha hecho con otras lenguas? 𐀀
- Sí, es absolutamente necesario 𐀀
- Sí, siempre que no sea excesivamente artificial 𐀀
- Sí, siempre que se respeten las variantes 𐀀
- No, es preferible dejar cada habla 𐀀
- No, en absoluto 𐀀
- NS 𐀀
- 42- ¿le gustaría a usted que se hablara en el futuro en el Alto Aragón, en aragonés? 𐀀
- Sí, Sólo en aragonés 𐀀
- Sí, más en aragonés que en castellano 𐀀
- En ambos por igual 𐀀
- Más en castellano que en aragonés 𐀀
- No, solo en castellano 𐀀
- NS 𐀀

- 43- Si ha contestado sí a la pregunta 34 y a la 42, ¿Cree usted que debe procurarse un reconocimiento y protección oficial del “aragonés común”?
- Sí, en su localidad
 - Sí, en su comarca
 - Sí, en el Alto Aragón
 - Sí, en todo Aragón
 - No
 - Es indiferente
 - NC
- 44- Una forma de proteger la propia lengua es enseñarla en las escuelas a los niños. ¿Con cuál de estas posibles soluciones está usted más de acuerdo para el Alto Aragón?
- Debe estudiarse obligatoriamente en las escuelas
 - Debe estudiarse voluntariamente en las escuelas
 - No debe estudiarse en las escuelas
 - NS
- 45- ¿Tiene usted conocimiento de alguna institución pública o privada que se dedique a la promoción del aragonés bien localmente o regionalmente?
- Sí
 - No
- 46- ¿Qué organizaciones o instituciones conoce usted que realicen esta labor
- La Diputación de Huesca
 - La Consejería de Cultura de Aragón
 - El Instituto de Estudios Altoaragoneses
 - El Consello d’a Fabla Aragonesa
 - El Ayuntamiento de Ayerbe
 - La comarca de La Hoya de Huesca/ Plana de Huesca
 - Partidos Nacionalistas y Regionalistas
 - Otros partidos
 - Otros (¿Cuáles?)-----
- 47- ¿Tiene usted en su casa discos, CDs o cassettes?
- Sí
 - No
- 48- ¿Cuántos de ellos están en aragonés o fabla local?
- La mayoría
 - La mitad más o menos
 - Menos de la mitad
 - Unos pocos

- Ninguno
- 49- ¿Tiene usted en su casa libros?
- Sí
 - No
- 50- ¿Cuántos de ellos están en aragonés o fabla local?
- La mayoría
 - La mitad más o menos
 - Menos de la mitad
 - Unos pocos
 - Ninguno
- 51- ¿Suele usted leer periodicos y revistas?
- Sí
 - No
- 52- ¿Cuántos de ellos están en aragonés o fabla local?
- La mayoría
 - La mitad más o menos
 - Menos de la mitad
 - Unos pocos
 - Ninguno
- 53- ¿Cree usted que debería haber alguna revista o periódico íntegramente o al menos con secciones fijas en aragonés o fabla local?
- Sí
 - No
 - NC
- 54- En cuanto a la radio y la televisión ¿Cómo considera usted la presencia del aragonés o fabla local en los programas de Radio y televisión?
- Excesiva
 - Suficiente
 - Escasa
 - NS

Nombre y apellidos de la persona entrevistada:-----

Fecha:-----

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